VOLUME 1, NO. 10

WORLD'S FIRST NEWSPAPER OF HORROR [illegible] FANTASY!

GIANT COLOR POSTER INSIDE

the Monster Times

50c

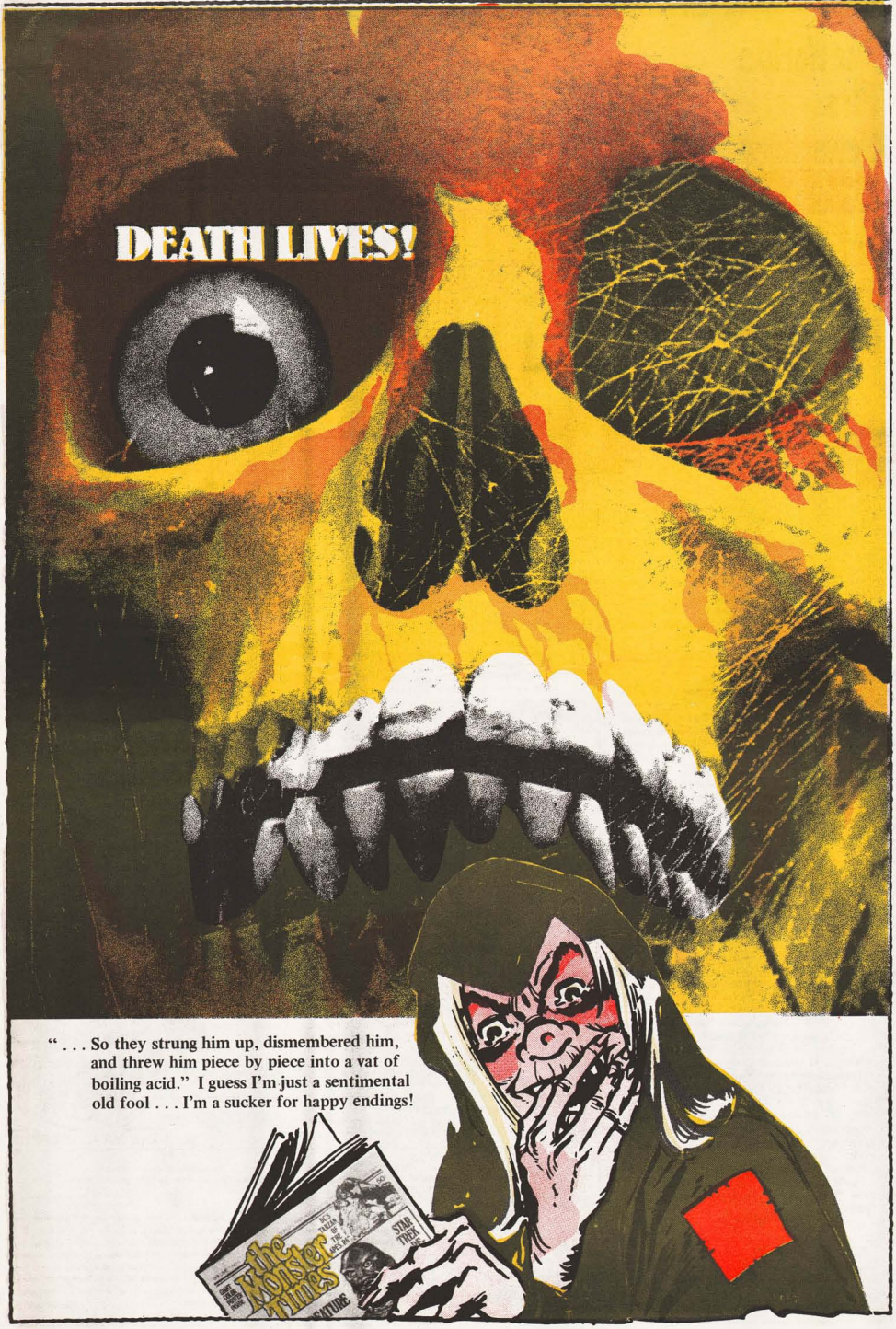
MEET SEYMOUR ON P.26

THE MOST HORRIFYING COMICS OF ALL TIME LIE IN WAIT FOR YOU WITHIN THE PAGES OF THIS PAPER! PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE MOST TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE!!!

WARNING!

AN ENTERTAINING EC COMIC

ON SALE EVERY 2 WEEKS


DEATH LIVES!
"... So they strung him up, dismembered him, and threw him piece by piece into a vat of boiling acid." I guess I'm just a sentimental old fool ... I'm a sucker for happy endings!
the Monster Times
STAR TREK

The World's First Newspaper of Horr... Sci-F... and Fa...

the Monster Times

Volume 1, No.10

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This issue, as you may have noticed (you'd have to be blind not to), is dedicated to E.C. Comics. Not only to the comics themselves, but to the people who gave them to us. To Bill Gaines. To Al Feldstein. To Wally Wood and Jack Davis. To Al Williamson, Roy Krenkel and Frank Frazetta. To Ray Bradbury and Graham (Ghastly) Ingels. To The Crypt-Keeper, The Old Witch and The Vault-Keeper. To the whole batch of the most fantastically talented loonies ever to come out of a cosmic booby-hatch.

A special Thank-You to Woody Gelman, for bringing us the fantastic hard-cover book devoted to the E.C.'s "Horror comics of the 1950's.

And to the fans of E.C., spanning generations . . . you and me . . . and the countless others who, we hope, will get as much of a blast out of seeing this issue as we got putting the whole thing together.

E.C. covered alot of territory in the old days . . . from here on Earth clear out to the planets and stars . . . down dusty back alleys and swamps rotting with death . . . in ancient castles and realms of unspeakable horrors (I'd talk about them, but they ARE, after all, unspeakable!).

In short, we hope you get caught up in our issue (and there's alot of super-stuff to get caught in, too). We hope you walk away after reading it with more than you had before (. . . and we hope the person you took it from doesn't miss whatever part of him you're walking away with). And by all means, have a good time (The Crypt-Keeper always did! Heh, Heh!)

So put on your spacesuits or don your glop-proof clothes. Oil your spaceships or sharpen your axes. You're about to take a trip through E.C. Land. Just jump right on in . . . you'll see alot of things along the way . . . whether you're being fascinated or frightened, have a good time. It's all for fun! And as a matter of fact, I'm *dying* to start already . . . See you next ish for another voyage through . . . Heh, Heh! You'll never know 'til you read it (or see the "Next Issue" department on the last page)!

Allan —

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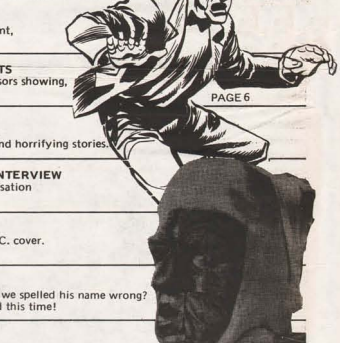

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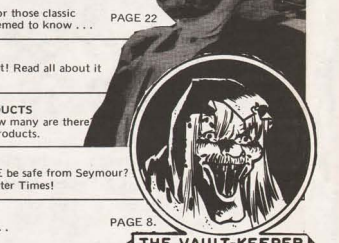

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THE VAULT-KEEPER

TALES FROM THE CRYPT on paper and on screen. The horrifying, haunting hideous qualities of both the comics and the film is here captured for readers of The Monster Times in this cover by Wendy Wenzel.

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Printed in U.S.A.

The late H.L. Mencken, known as the "Image Breaker" by his peers in the history business, would not have been welcome by the EC fan. Mencken was always known as the defiler of the pseudo-gods, attacker of the unattackable, and criticizer of the untouchables. E.C. Comics have become all of those to their fans—pseudo-gods, untouchable, unattackable—and any attacks Mencken might have mustered against the myth that has formed around the Entertaining Comics groups would not be readily appreciated.

Fans venerate anything concerning the EC comics group. Folk lore has perpetuated itself for years. All those fans (or as they like to be called, "fan-addicts") pictured the employees of the EC group as knights on white horses, rescuing the reader from the mediocrity of comic books in the 1950's. In fact, however, EC was

like any comic outfit during the trying 50's. The 1950's were lean years for comics, and everyone, EC included, was looking for some gimmick to hypo sales. They would try anything to sell their books. E.C. was lucky—they found the gimmick. Any company might have, National, Atlas, Fiction House, Charlton, Dell, any publisher of the 50's. But EC found the gimmick first. Their gimmick was quality.

Recently, those EC fan-addicts, the very same who twenty years before fell for the EC gimmick, published an ever-lasting tribute to their knights in shining armor—a 208 page, full color book reprinting the best stories EC had done. They have not forgotten, and The Monster Times' very own Joe Brancatelli takes a look at the book, the outfit that inspired them, and the people behind the legend.

H.L. Mencken, where are you when we need you?

What prompts anyone to plunk down twenty hard earned dollars for a book. Especially a book of stories taken from those supposedly god-awful, offensive horror comics of the fifites. You might remember those horror stories, terrible, grisly tales of grue and gore. They were the stories that incited a nation. So controversial were these stories, they prompted a Congressional witch-hunt, led by the venerable old witch-hunter himself, the late Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee.

So what motivates a person to blow twenty clams on a book that all the established institutions tell us is bad. Discounting the rich, the people who buy anything that is anti-establishment and the mobsters who must hide their money from Uncle Sam, the overwhelming reason is that misty-eyed commodity known as NOSTALGIA.

For those of you too young to be struck by nostalgia, let us tell you a little about the peerless fifties. Or at least the state of comic books in the fifties (this isn't the AMERICAN HISTORY QUARTERLY, or hadn't you noticed).

This picture of a quiet day in the desert, presented by the incredible Reed Crandall, is the ending of "Carrion Death." From SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES #9, 1953, we understand this tale was a favorite of vultures everywhere.

Comics were not in good health in the decade that also featured such luminaries as Joe McCarthy, Alger Hiss and some Californian with long jowls named Dick Nixon (you remember him). The comic book had just emerged from a period later to be known as the "Golden Age of Comics" from 1939 to about 1945. From then to about 1949, they marked time, feeling their way around, looking for a trend to replace the now tarnished image of the super-hero who had been the stalwart of the good times. In that Golden Age, such long-johned good guys as Captain Marvel were selling about two and a half million copies every ... 1.50 ... weeks, with Superman close behind. But the end of World War II also ended the dominace of the super-hero (who had spent most of his time beating Krauts and Nips. Someone once calculated that American super-heroes had killed about nine billion of the enemy.) And the slump that started in the late forties developed into a serious depression in the early months of 1950. All the big companies were looking for a trend that would sell comics. The super hero was dead (indeed, the Big Red Cheese, as Captain Marvel was called, had dropped to about 300,000 copies a month and would not survive the fifties or a lawsuit with Superman), cowboys were not selling and romance wasn't exactly making readers storm the newsstands. Kids were giving up comic books in droves, spending most of the time they were supposed to spend doing homework watching that ... jiggled televi... set. ...ies folded by the dozen, and it looked as if the comic book industry, conceived in the early 1930's by M.C. Gaines (remember that name), Irwin Donnenfeld and several others was about to die a quiet death. And then came E.C. comics.

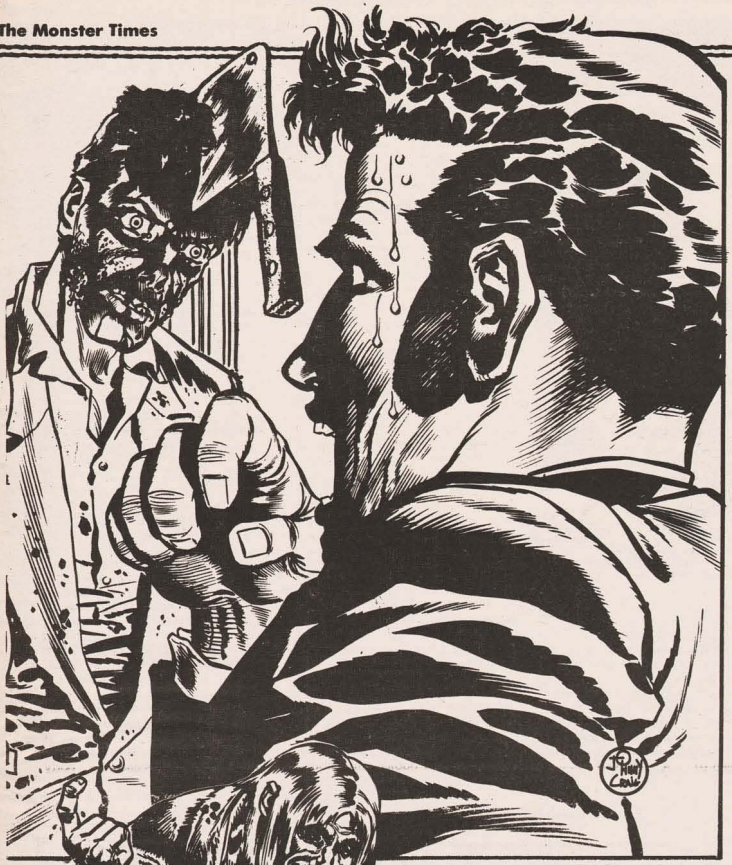
Well, not really. E.C. (first standing for Educational Comics and then Entertaining Comics) had been around for a while, created by M.C. Gaines (we told you to remember him) in the mid-forties. It too was looking for a trend. It had bet on cowboy comics, romance comics, sf comics, and all sorts of combinations of the aforementioned (for instance one title started as MOON GIRL, changed to A MOON-... A GIRL... ROMANCE and then finally MOON GIRL FIGHTS CRIME). Their Managing Editor, Bill Gaines (yes, folks, poppa's son) and Editor Al Feldstein (he wasn't related, he just walked into the office one day) decided they might try horror. They created a few story tellers.

Feldstein and Gaines' creations, The Crypt-Keeper, The Old Witch and The Vault Keeper, were obnoxious if they were anything. Sarcastic, impudent and absolutely shiftless, they wove yarns of horror, twisting tales of gore and gruesome reality. The three witches dealt in perverted scenes of horror, scary gore and simply disgusting realism. No matter how horrible those tales of the witches were, the main characters were rotten people, and they all got theirs in the end, usually by some ironic twist of fate that sealed their doom.

And for about three years (from 1950 when Gaines and Feldstein introduced the pilot magazines, THE HAUNT OF FEAR and THE CRYPT OF TERROR), E.C. comics were the hottest sellers going. They introduced war books, crime books, science fiction books, humor books, and they all were gobbled off the stands. And they were imitated.

And that was EC's downfall. Their imitators tried hard to match EC's class, but couldn't. Their tales almost always ended as senseless situation-violence. They were bad books, thrown together to capitalize on EC's popularity. Many of the younger kids couldn't tell the difference, and brought home the trashy imitations and their parents found them. Justifiably angered, the public raised an outcry. Men like Estes Kefauver seized upon the comic book horror, and called for their censorship. Fredric Wertham, a psychiatrist who has been on a life long crusade against violence in the media, published a book entitled SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, reprinting lots of EC art, but neglecting to mention the story line of EC comics, or to differenciate between them and their imitators. With the public aroused, the comic industry (or at least some of the industry) instituted a self-censoring body

The last four panels from "Midnight Mess," drawn by Joe Orlando. This bloody-but-beautiful tale gave E.C.'s version of what became of the old, honored professional vampire. From TALES FROM THE CRYPT #35; 1953.



A scoop, for all you sharp readers of TMT. Johnny Craig's cover for THE VAULT OF HORROR #32 was finally published without the axe, making it a much duller cover!

Horsemeat, anyone? The Old Crypt-Keeper beckons to all his frantic little fans at the start of the 1952 tale "Tain't The Meat . . . . It's The Humanity!" Drawn by Jack Davis.

known to this day as the Comics Code Authority. The Code had its desired effect, placating an incensed public, who then went back to persecuting non-existant communists, but by then EC had been struck a mortal blow. Distributors refused to distribute them, vendors refused to sell them, and EC comics were dead. They threw in the towel in 1955, and after several brief attempts at revivals, EC faded into whatever old comic companies fade into.

Or so the editors thought. The fans of EC never relented. They went underground, publishing clandestine magazines, never forgetting EC. They reemerged briefly in 1964, when Ballantine Books published paperbacks that reprinted some EC stories. Later merging with the now growing general comic fandom, they educated a whole new audience to EC comics. Now there were two EC fandoms; the original group, that saved their lunch money to buy the EC's as they came off the presses, and, the new group, the fans of EC who were too young to have bought EC off the stands, but who were paying $10 and $15 at comic conventions for the honor of owning an EC comic book.

For the original EC fan, HORROR LIBRARY OF THE 1950's is a memento, a reassurance that what was good for them, is good for the youth of today. For the new EC fan, it's a sort of legitimacy. A sort of refirmation of the validity of comic collecting. And that is why the EC book will become a classic, if not in terms of sales, definitely in terms of feeling. That feeling of nostalgia, if you will.

The book reprints twenty-three stories between its covers. They are all hallmarks of EC comics. Everyone of them a nugget of writing that you'd swear took days to even conceive, not to mention the actual plotting, dialoguing, panel breakdowns and everything else. And the art . . . heaven, pure and simple.

Some critics of EC comics (No doubt sons of the irrepressible H.L. Mencken) claim that E.C.'s comics fall into the trap of repetition. They claim that stories are basically similar. The villain, who might not look like the villain at first, is a supremely rotten guy, and in the end, through some irony gets justice dealt to him from the bottom of the deck. That, critics persist, is the basis for every one of E.C.'s horror tales. What they fail to realize is that all comic writing is formula writing, and that E.C. found a formula that provided consistently interesting tales is an achievement in itself.

But the amazing thing is that most all the tales in this book, indeed almost all E.C. stories, were written in one day by a combination of Gaines and Felstein. Comic publishing is a hectic business, and deadline pressures force a rapid pace, this making comic writing tantamount to hack jobs. But somehow, someway, Feldstein got the twist ending in everytime, and simultaneously developed a style. A comic style. Feldstein developed a fluid style that read like the great short story writers, especially Bradbury and De Maupassant. Later EC even began adapting some of the memorable Ray Bradbury stories into comic strips.

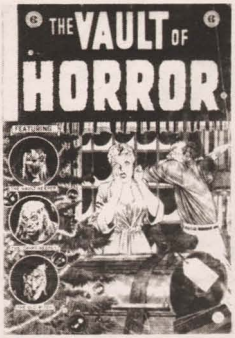
But enough of the abstracts. You want to know about the stories in the book. Well, since THE MONSTER TIMES is in the entertainment business, and since THE MONSTER TIMES is not above recognizing the achievements of others, let us tell you about some of those EC masterpeices.

For our money, 'TAIN'T THE MEAT . . . IT'S THE HUMANITY is the best in the book. Set in the World War II era of food rationing, old Zach Gristle, small time butcher, decides to get into the black market. He sells his relatively small amoung of choice meat to black market customers, while the regulars get horsemeat. When that runs out, the regulars get spoiled meat, then tainted meat, all

'TAIN'T THE MEAT . . . IT'S THE HUMANITY is a quaint little yarn about a butcher . . . one that will surely tickle your spare-ribs! This meaty melodrama comes from TALES OF THE CRYPT #32 and was cleaverly done by none other than Jack Davis.

unbeknownst to them. Old Zach's wife discovers this, but does nothing until her own son is killed by eating the tainted meat (seems he was a guest at one of his dad's customers). What does she do? Well, Mrs. Gristle cleaves old Zach to death and opens up her husband's store with . . . choke . . . her husband all carved up and on display in the store showcase. Meaty tale, wot?

Another, aptly titled FOUL PLAY, features super-nasty Herbie Satten. Herbie is a real mean guy. So intent was Herbie on winning a ball game for his team, that he put poison on his cleats, then spiked the opposing second basemen in what looked like a useless steal attempt. The poison was quick acting, and, as it would happen, the second baseman falls dead shortly after Satten strikes him out, ending a rally. The other team knows it's Satten's doing, and in a most grisly revenge, they dismember Satten, then play a game of ball, using Satten's bloody head as the ball, his leg as a bat, his heart as home plate and his intestines as the foul line. They sure threw him a curve, eh? And while we don't want to ruin your fun when you buy the book,



This woman is certainly NOT going to have a Merry Christmas, thanks to Johnny Craig and the staff of E.C., who arranged for her appearance in VAULT OF HORROR #33.

we want to mention one other tale that struck our fancy. It's called STROP! YOU'RE KILLING ME! It's a devilish tale of two firemen, who hate each other. One night, while one was on duty, a call comes to save the other's house. Naturally, the fireman on duty takes his time, and eliminates his enemy, who died in the fire. The dead fire-fighter gets his revenge several months later, when the remaining fireman gets a call to put out a fire at his own house. But while going down the descent pole, he is slashed to death. Someone (and the story indicates that it is the dead fireman) has replaced the pole with a sharp blade. Cutting tale, yes?

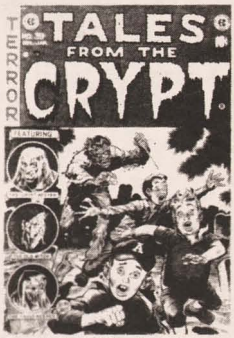
If we had ten issues to discuss this book, I might talk at some length about the artistic content of this book. How can you discuss the legendary art of E.C. comics? (And any of you out there who said "quickly" deserve to be starred in a new EC story entitled HOT SEAT, the tale of Santa Claus coming down a lit fireplace.) They compiled in just five years the best collection of artists ever to grace the pages of comics.

There was Graham Ingels, the head of the staff. His art was so horribly unique he started signing his name GHASTLY. Ingels had a non-descript career before joining E.C., and declined after EC folded and later disappeared, but his work for E.C. was amazing. Never before in the history of the comic medium, perhaps illustrating itself,

The Graham Ingels cover for "Horror We, How's Bayou?" Haunt of Fear #25 was never the same, as Ghastly struck again!

had any artist so graphically portrayed and conveyed the sense of horror as Ingels had. His work was truely inspired.

Then there was Jack Davis. Davis is a genius, pure and simple. You've seen his work countless times, on



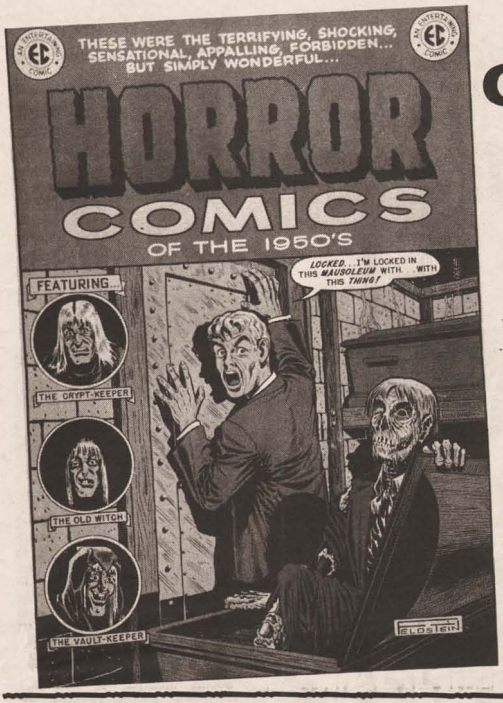
Tag . . . You're it, kids, if this Jack Davis ghoulie gets you!

TV GUIDE covers, television station commercials, MAD MAGAZINE and many others. It was Davis who portrayed the previously mentioned Zach Gristle who ended up in the meat showcase. It was also Davis whose grisly portrayal of Herbie Satten being dismembered in FOUL PLAY made the story famous. He's most recently drawn SESAME STREET's "Cookie Monster" so well that when TV GUIDE wanted the monster for one of its covers, they chose Davis.

Reed Crandall was another, as was George Evans. They may not be familiar names, but they are geniuses in their own right. And, of course, there was the young Al Williamson, present SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN artist, who drew for EC. He couldn't draw faces then, but could he draw everything else. The other names flow like water down a mountain: Frazetta, Orlando, Feldstein, Craig,

Continued on page 25

This poor devil is about to be "Swamped," in HAUNT OF FEAR #27. Reed Crandall created the story, with an unforgettable feeling of muddy death that haunted the newsstands in 1954.



EC HORROR COMICS OF THE 50'S

Dim the lights and close the doors as those FETID FOLKTALES of the 1950's bubble forth in FULL COLOR from the witch's cauldron. A selection of the greatest scare stories from HAUNT OF FEAR, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, and VAULT OF HORROR . . . including a rare unpublished TERROR TALE.

These stories will terrify you like they terrified a whole generation of readers! *EC HORROR COMICS OF THE 1950's* features a fantastic collection of terror stories plus the original ads for *MAD*, artist biographies and more! From the comic book company that brought readers the finest horror stories of its time comes a collector's edition you must have!

Great comix artists like WALLY WOOD, JACK DAVIS, FRANK FRAZETTA, AL WILLIAMSON! Stories reproduced in Full Color! 23 horrifying epics from the original comics! All the old ads and editorials plus artist biographies! The comics that caused all the excitement way back when! These are the comics they wouldn't let you read!

THE MONSTER TIMES
P.O. Box 595, Old Chelsea Station
New York, N.Y. 10011

Yes, send me the Collector's Limited Edition Copy of *EC HORROR COMICS OF THE 1950's* for which I enclose $19.95 plus $1.00 Postage and Handling. (Total $20.95)

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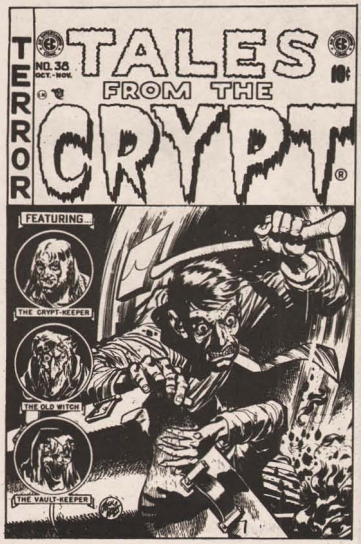
GIANT EC POSTERS!



DEATH LIVES! In these two FULL-COLOR vintage E.C. Posters! Original covers of TALES FROM THE CRYPT NO. 38 and THE VAULT OF HORROR NO. 32. Never published in these versions because they were considered TOO frightening, these never-before-seen renditions can now be yours! Printed 22"x28" on sturdy paper stock, these masterpieces are always sent rolled, in sturdy mailing tubes, for Super-protection. The VAULT cover is by Johnny Craig, and the CRYPT cover by famed cartoonist Jack Davis. The best in art, color, clarity and horror, all yours for only $2.50 plus .50 postage, each. The supply will be limited, so we urge you to order now!

THE MONSTER TIMES, DEPT. EC
P.O. Box 595, Old Chelsea Station
New York, N.Y. 10011

Please send the full color posters I've checked below:

____ Yes, I want the TALES FROM THE CRYPT E.C. Horror Poster, by Jack Davis; enclosed is $2.50 plus 50c postage (Total of $3.00).

____ Yes, I want the VAULT OF HORROR E.C. Horror Poster, by Johnny Craig; enclosed is $2.50 plus 50c postage (Total of $3.00).

____ I am an E.C. FREAK, and must have BOTH these incredible posters. Enclosed find my $4.60 plus 50c postage (Total of $5.10).

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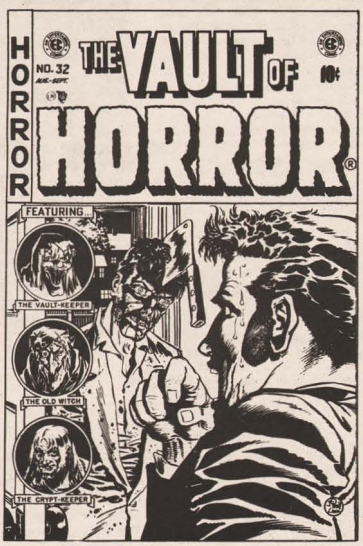


Introducin' the Gruesome Threesome

INTERVIEW BY MARK EVANIER

Continuing our inhuman coverage of all things unbeautiful, we at The Monster Times hired a top private defective who bravely located those emcees of E.C. comix; The Vault-Keeper ('The Vault of Horror'), The Crypt-Keeper ('Tales From the Crypt'), and The Old Witch ('The Haunt of Fear'). Checking further, we found someone willing to interview them (Our defective is now in the Serenity Sanitarium for No-Good Nuts). Yes, we found Mark Evanier, and flew him from Los Angeles to Brooklyn (on a broomstick . . . of course), to introduce our readers to The Gruesome Threesome.

"Heh, heh, heh! So glad to see you, my brain-withered worthies! So the worm has taken a turn for the worse, has it, and wandered smack into your friendly old Vault-Keeper's ancient abode, eh? Well . . . you're just in time—there's mind-melting, spine-shaking stories a-plenty awaiting you in this latest unearthly edition of THE MONSTER TIMES! So step right into my Vault, don't be shy . . . and close the door behind me you. You won't be using it again . . ."

"This is the perfect assignment for you," they were telling me. "You don't know the meaning of the word, **fear**. You don't know the meaning of the word, **quit**. We've read over a lot of your articles, Evanier. You don't know the meaning of very many words, do you?"

" 'Fear,' " I said, " '(noun) Painful emotion excited by apprehension of impending danger; dread; the object of fear; filial regard mingled with awe; reverence. (verb transitive) to feel fear; to apprehend . . .'"

"Can the cute stuff," they said, "we need an interview for this issue of **The Monster Times**, so we want you to go talk to the three ghouls who used to host the E.C. horror comic books. Here's the address. Be there in ten minutes."

"Quit," I said, "(adjective) Discharged; released; free; clear. (verb transitive) quitting, quitted . . ."

JOURNEY INTO BROOKLYN!

Ten minutes later, however, I was knocking upon a certain door in the heart of Flatbush—Why, I don't know. Something about my body being maimed if I didn't come back with the interview. The door swung open, slowly and with a noticeable Inner Sanctum squeal. The interior of the house was dark, very much so. But I was able to make out the hunched-over form of the Vault-Keeper, with no problem.

Not since 1954 had the Vault-Keeper been seen in public, nor his partners, the Crypt-Keeper and the Old Witch. It was then that their popular horror comics—**The Vault of Horror, Tales From the Crypt,** and **The Haunt of Fear,** respectively—were discontinued. Save for a few reprints, they had all been retired ever since. And it was remarkable how well-remembered they were, in some circles.

. . . RAPPING AT MY CHAMBER DOOR!

"Who is it?" yelled a voice from somewhere within the old house. "Is it another Avon lady, V.K.?"

The craggy features of the Vault-Keeper were beginning to come into focus. He looked as he always had. Sickening. "Heh heh," he chuckled. "No, it's just some tall, skinny gloop. Come on it, putrid puss! What brings you here?"

I introduced myself as a reporter from **The Monster Times**.

"Oh." He sounded disappointed. "I was thinking it might be someone important. Well, here I am in the livid flesh, the Vault-Keeper. Care to hear one of my nauseating novelettes? Got a dandy here about a husband who sticks his wife in a microwave oven. It's called 'Spouse-Warming'—!"

"Uh, not right now, if you don't mind," I said. "Who was that I heard yelling to you, just a minute ago?"

GALLERY OF GORE!

"Oh, that's the Old Witch! Come on, sloosh over this way and I'll introduce you to her."

As he led me through the corridors, I studied this majestic home where they had ensconced themselves for retirement. It was all very old and very ornate. As we walked down the hall, I noticed a series of portraits of Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Lon Chaney and Jerry Lewis. "What's Jerry Lewis doing up there with all these masters of screen horror?" I asked.

The Vault-Keeper stopped in his

"Hee, hee! If it isn't me! Yours truly, the Old Witch, and I've got my trusty broom with witch I'll sweep a little gloom & doom your way. Yessir, my evil brew's been steamin' an' bubblin' just to make it hot for you. Won't you join me in a cup? It's the kind E.C. fans like—puts hair on your chest, warts on your nose, and flowers on your grave!"

tracks and looked up at me. "Obviously, you've never seen a Jerry Lewis movie."

I was led into a high-ceiling room, well-cluttered with cob-webs. The walls were lined with ancient books and potions. In the center, a bubbling cauldron stood. "Is this the Old Witch's laboratory?" I asked.

"It ain't Dinah's Place," the Vault-Keeper responded.

While the Vault-Keeper had aged little in almost twenty years, the Old Witch was altogether different. She shuffled in, holding a lizard by the tail, and seeming oblivious to my presence. "I'm so glad it wasn't another Avon Lady, V.K. We haven't finished the last one, yet! Hee hee!" Suddenly, I was spotted. "Well, it's about slime we got some young blood around here. Fond felicitations, freak! Welcome to my Hacienda of Horror. Step up and glom a scrumptious slew of slop from my crud-crusted cauldron!"

I was at a loss for words to refuse. This, Emily Post never covered. I wouldn't even know which fork to use to eat a slew of slop. I tried to change the subject. "Say, is the Crypt-Keeper around? I always got a kick out of his stories. Is he here?"

A SLEW OF SLOP!

The Old Witch motioned to a chair. "He'll be back in a few minutes. Park your crumbling carcass, slob. So, you're from The Monster Times, huh?"

"That's right," I said. "I understand you're subscribers."

The Vault-Keeper cut in. "Heh heh, yep! It's a little far out for us, though. Especially that rancid reviewer of yours, Rex Reed."

"That's Women's Wear Daily, you're thinking of, V.K.," said the Old Witch. "You're a real Ghoulunatic."

"Just what do you two do all day now that you're retired? Ever have the urge to get back in harness?"

The Old Witch answered as she stirred her cauldron. "I cook, mostly. Say, you sure you wouldn't like a slew of slop? Made it myself! One sip of this and your whole face will break out. It's a shame a scrawny kid like you doesn't have acne."

NO MONSTERS IN MAD!!

"We're still on pensions from E.C., you know," the Vault-Keeper explained. "When our putrid periodicals got the ax, there was just no place for us to vamoose to. I mean, we only agreed to tie ourselves down to those maggoty magazines so we could share our yelp yarns with the world. We were getting a little fed up, anyway, with those idiot editors. They were futzing around with all these stagnating stories of science-fiction and pirates and stuff. And that real wretch Mad. I looked through three whole issues. Couldn't find a werewolf or a zombie . . . what a loser. We told those comic schnooks at E.C. they had a bomb on their hands but that wretched rag actually caught on! No one cared to hear our blood-curdling, spine-tingling, heaping helpings of horror, anymore. Say, you want to hear one? I have a gruesome gagging right here about a husband who cremates his wife and puts her ashes in an hourglass. It's called 'The Time of Your Wife!'"

Just then, I was spared by the sound of a door slam, elsewhere in the old house.

"Crypt-Keeper's in," the Old Witch announced. "You can meet him, if you like. Personally, I don't see what you see in that old fool of a ghoul. His terror tales looked like nursery rhymes, next to mine."

"Heh heh, here he comes," V.K. signaled.

"Bah! Out of my way!" The Crypt-Keeper pushed his way into the room. He was obviously not in the mood to converse. "Nine people stopped me on the street, today, for autographs. They all thought I was Sir Ralph Richardson, whoever he is!"

"He's the actor who played you in the 'Tales From the Crypt' movie," I explained.

"Who's the skinny kid without acne?" he asked the others.

THE MONSTER TIMES, EH?

"Heh heh, he's from that nauseating newspaper, The Monster Times responded the Vault-Keeper.

The Crypt-Keeper's face, I noted, had not changed much. The added years only gave it more of its ghoulish flavor. Now, as I was introduced, it began to have that faintly sinister smirk. He peered at me, then brightened up considerably. "A repulsive reporter, huh? Heh heh, so you came to learn at the feet of the old master of cemeteries, the Crypt-Keeper. Well, you'll be amply-sickened by the time I get through with you. You seem a little young to have been a fearsome follower of my muck-mag . . ."

"Well," I said, "They were a bit before my time. But there's been a renewed interest these days, in the old E.C. comics. Reprints . . . movies . . . They're even holding a big convention . . ."

"And you know why?" The Crypt-Keeper almost bolted from his chair. "It's because these guys, today, don't know horror! They think it's all biting necks and trick endings and the guy you least suspect turning out to be the werewolf! Putresence is in the hands of amateurs! Why, in my yecchy yelp yarns . . . Here, let me give you a demoniac demonstration!"

Before I could protest, the Crypt-Keeper shoved me over to a guillotine and locked my head under its hanging blade. "Now, that's horror! Are you scared, huh?"

I had to admit that I was.

"Your shoulders are shivering. Your trunk is trembling. Now, for a quivering quip . . . The Monster Times lost a good reporter when they tried to cut down on the overhead! You get it?"

CURSED RENTED GUILLOTINE!

"I get it! I get it! Now, let me out of here!"

"Heh heh! Not yet! We've got too good a story going!"

"But that blade could fall, any minute!"

"Say, grimy! You've got a pretty good neck on your shoulders. Here we go. I'm pressing the release!"

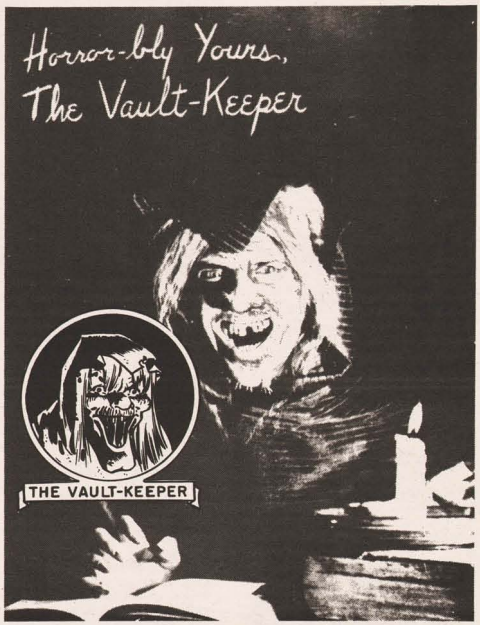
Nothing happened. When I opened my eyes, I could still open my eyes. The Crypt-Keeper was pounding the side of the guillotine.

"That's the last order I place with Abbey Rents! Horror is a grave undertaking! Can't do it with cheap equipment."

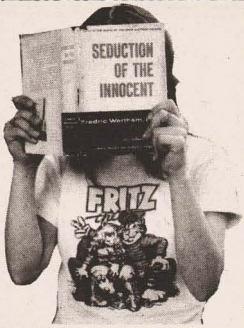
The Vault-Keeper unbuckled me and led me towards the door. "Come back next week when he gets it working right. You'll just love his cadaverous cavortings! By bye and buy Vault of Horror!"

Once outside, I ran for my life—sweating, shaking . . . unable to even think straight.

And that, general, is the whole truth and why I think I qualify for a Medical Exemption from the Draft. ■



"Well, my blood-curdled kiddies, if you aren't a sight for gouged eyes! Your friend the Crypt-Keeper is here to, heh-heh, "sock-et" to you . . . and I hope you remember to keep an eye out for him. Go ahead, take a long look around the crypt . . . I know you would have wanted it that way . . ."



Looks like there's more than one seduction going on here as Crumb-shirted TMT staffer studies Dr. Wertham's book, apparently unmindful of the X-rated antics taking place below.

"A GIRL RAPED AND MURDERED," reads Wertham's caption. Not only is there no mention of raps in the story this sketch illustrated, but it didn't even appear in a comic book. The illo is from a magazine . . . not that "expert" Wertham can be bothered with such trifling distinctions.

Here come da SHRINK!!!

SPAWN OF DR. WERTHAM By Don Thompson

In the motion-picture business, the expression is "The Face on the Cutting Room Floor." The cutters . . . lovingly calling themselves "censors . . . are at work elsewhere, too, dispensing such amounts of entertainment from time to time, as their superior minds decide the world is ready for. In the 1950's there were many censors of many types, mostly political. And you could never tell when something like entertainment, namely comics, would be defined as political, or important enough to be smeared and hidden and killed off. The motives are not always illogical or impersonal. Some censors take up their work because they believe they are doing the right thing for mankind. Such a man is the learned and somewhat respected Dr. Fredric Wertham (Real name: Frederic I. Wertheim). His motives? Who can tell. Only one thing is certain . . . He does what he believes in. Is he right to any extent? Or wrong to what extent? When you find out the man's position on comics, you'll have an opinion of your own.

The Entertaining Comics Group (born the Educational Comics Group) was a prime target for censors with so many titles offering graphic stories of crime, war, horror and science fiction.

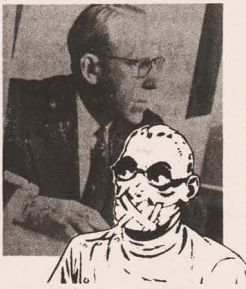
When the pressures really mounted against comic books in the early 1950's, a noticeable amount of the pressure was applied to EC. Other targets included the Lev Gleason publications (gory crime books like Crime Does Not Pay) and Fiction house (with bikini-clad white girls whipping up on the natives in Africa and getting tied up a lot).

I understand that Dr. Fredric Wertham has denied to THE MONSTER TIMES that he ever attacked EC. Interesting.

Dr. Wertham's SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT (Rinehart, 1954) lacks an index, so it is difficult to sort out all the mentions of EC stories and titles. But the 16-page spread of pictures from the comics which makes up the center signature of the book includes three full pages from EC titles.

Dr. Wertham's never credited any of the illustrations. In fact, the publisher's name was removed from two of the three covers he reproduced, including a Johnny Craig cover from Crime Suspence Stories showing a closeup of a hanged man. Craig's signature was whited out, too, though the circle he put it in remains. (The only cover which identified the publisher was Hillman Publications. Crime Detective Comics which showed a psychiatrist named Dr. M. Brown tied and gagged. The picture is captioned "Caricature of the author in a position comic-book publishers wish he were in permanently." Dr. Brown does not resemble Dr. Wertham in the slightest.)

"COVER OF A CHILDREN'S COMIC BOOK," says the kindly Dr. but Johnny Craig's portrait of hanged man actually presents a pretty unappetizing view of violence to us MTers.



"CARICATURE OF THE AUTHOR IN A POSITION COMIC-BOOK PUBLISHERS WISH HE WERE IN PERMANENTLY." While the author of this article sees no resemblance between bound shrink and Dr. Wertham—citing it instead as another example of the good doctor's boundless paranoia—we at TMT admit that it does indeed look like this particular comic-book publisher was indulging in a bit of wishful whimsy.

The Craig cover is pretty revolting, with the hanged man's face shown in extreme close-up, the tongue protruding and the eyeballs rolled back.

Even worse are two panels from a Jack Davis horror story showing a ballgame

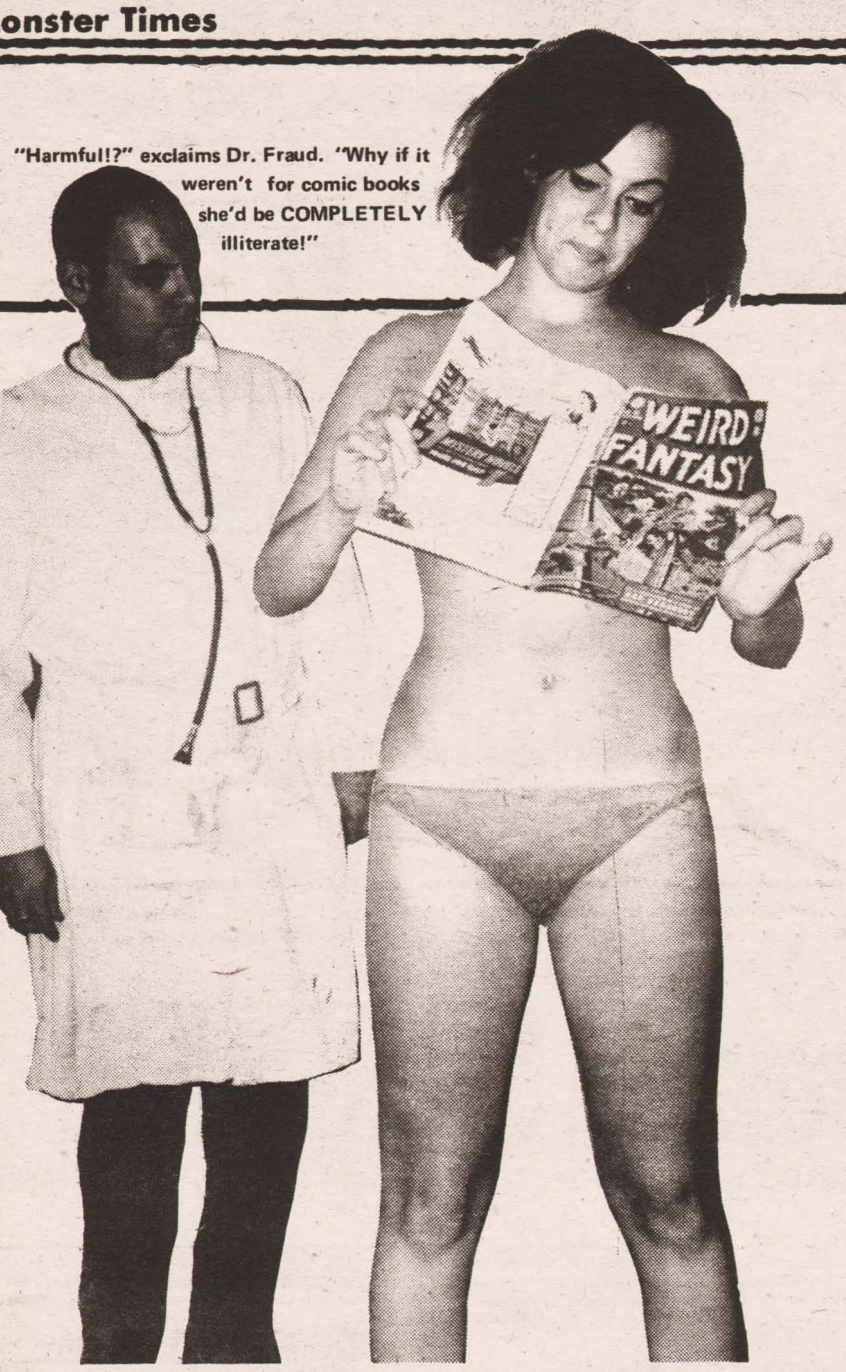
"A COMIC-BOOK BASEBALL GAME. NOTICE THE CHEST PROTECTOR AND OTHER DETAILS IN THE TEXT AND PICTURES." Can artist Jack Davis, who illustrated this story appearing in HAUNT OF FEAR No. 19 in 1953 help it if our national pastime is a rough sport?

using the dismembered body of the story's villain as sports equipment. The umpire dusts the plate with the scalp — the plate is the heart — the intestines mark the base lines — the arms and legs are bats — the torso is strapped on the catcher as a chest-protector — the hands are strapped on the infielders as mitts — the stomach is the rosin bag — and, of course, the head, eyeballs dangling, is the ball.

It has been said that Gaines insisted on that story being written and drawn as a defiance of the pressure groups that opposed horror comics. If so, it was a bad decision. The story was indefensible and provided the lead-off item for Wertham's gallery of bad examples from the comics. Many of his other items are ridiculous or lying — ridiculous is a closeup of a drawing of a man's shoulder in which Wertham sees a dirty picture; lying is a panel of a milkman discovering a woman's body and captioned "A girl raped and murdered" even though the story (from a pulp magazine, NOT from a comic book) NEVER implies rape. The Davis EC item was genuine and was cited by at least one reviewer as the convincing argument against comic books.

The other EC reprint is a fairly innocuous sequence from a Bill Elder science fiction story in which a Martian girl kills her husband when she discovers he is a "MAMMAL, which bears its yougng ALIVE . . . attached to the mother by an UMBILICAL cord," while "we lay EGGS! We HAVE NO NAVELS!" Dr. Wertham seemed pretty shaken by the use of the term "mammal"; my high-school biology

"IN ORDINARY COMIC BOOKS, THERE ARE PICTURES FOR CHILDREN WHO KNOW HOW TO LOOK." Dr. Wertham apparently sees a 'dirty' detail here and it makes one wonder if it is all in the eye of the beholder . . . another example of Rorschach raunch, perhaps? What hath Freud wrought?



INNOCENCE REGAINED

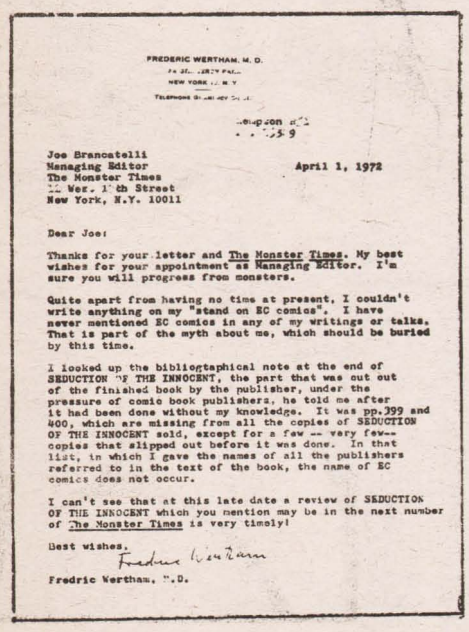
Contrary to Dr. Fredric Wertham's findings on "the pernicious influence of comic books on the youth of today," as contained in his shrill, neurotic tome SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, TMT's resident shrink, Dr. Sigmund Fraud, has proven beyond a shadow of a doubt the beneficial nature of these very same comics.

"The so-called 'comic' books," Dr. Fraud maintains, "afford the youth of America an early introduction to the violence and callousness that is so much an integral part of our present societal structure, but present them in such a way that said youth can clearly view the folly of these destructive elements. Rather than encouraging the propagation of the evils often depicted in the comic books," the eminent doctor, who holds a degree in Pseudology from Bronx Community College, continued, "they are represented in such a manner that they inspire a healthy sense of revulsion, rather than a desire to emulate the negative deeds."

Employing a cross-section of "youths of today" to serve as a test group, Dr. Fraud divided the group in two and locked them in separate rooms for a period lasting several weeks. One group was given a wide range of comic books to read, while the other was supplied with a set of Encyclopedia Britannicas. According to the doctor, the members of the first group emerged from their seclusion "so smart it would make your head spin," whereas the group who perused the encyclopaedic volumes were "so dull you couldn't even talk to them."

An interesting sidelight to emerge from the study was the fact that the group that had been allowed access to the comic books also had 44% fewer cavities than the other group. This unexpected finding prompted the good doctor to remark: "See? What'd I tell you!" While this dental development "eludes immediate explanation," Dr. Fraud assured us that this too will be cleared up in due time. "Gimme a couple minutes," he said, "and I'll come up with something." ■

The following letter, sent to us from the good Dr. Wertham himself, includes the interesting information that he "... never mentioned E.C. Comics in any of my writings or talks." He doesn't "talk" about them; he merely reprints them, accompanied by his own often highly fanciful captions.



FREDERIC WERTHAM, M. D.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

April 1, 1972

Joe Brancatelli
Managing Editor
The Monster Times
[illegible] West 17th Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

Dear Joe:

Thanks for your letter and The Monster Times. My best wishes for your appointment as Managing Editor. I'm sure you will progress from monsters.

Quite apart from having no time at present, I couldn't write anything on my "stand on EC comics". I have never mentioned EC comics in any of my writings or talks. That is part of the myth about me, which should be buried by this time.

I looked up the bibliographical note at the end of SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, the part that was cut out of the finished book by the publisher, under the pressure of comic book publishers, he told me after it had been done without my knowledge. It was pp.399 and 400, which are missing from all the copies of SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT sold, except for a few -- very few -- copies that slipped out before it was done. In that list, in which I gave the names of all the publishers referred to in the text of the book, the name of EC comics does not occur.

I can't see that at this late date a review of SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT which you mention may be in the next number of The Monster Times is very timely!

Best wishes,

Fredric Wertham

Fredric Wertham, M.D.

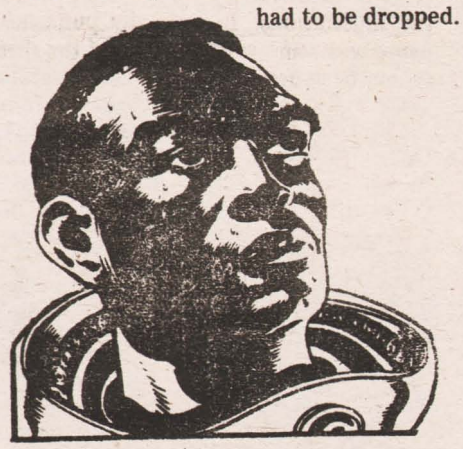
textbook would have jarred him badly.

Dr. Wertham's book was itself censored. The publisher sent men out to the stores, armed with razor blades, and had them cut out a "Bibliographical Note" which had been pages 399 and 400. Only a few copies of this list exist. I have photocopies of it — it lists the publishers quoted or referred to in the text, including some dummy companies for EC: Educational Comics, Inc., Fables Publishing Co. and Tiny Tot Comics, Inc. Several comic book publishers, including EC, used different companies to publish different books — if the books failed, creditors could only attach the assets of that company, not the entire line.

With the coming of the Comics Code Authority, EC killed the three horror comics which had been the financial support of much of the rest of the line, Vault of Horror, Tales from the Crypt and Haunt of Fear. A projected fourth title, The Crypt of Terror, never appeared except as the final issue of Tales from the Crypt.

Weird Science-Fantasy underwent some changes, too. It went from WEIRD Science-Fantasy to Weird SCIENCE-FANTASY to Incredible Science Fiction. And Earthmen quit losing to aliens; the Code did not like that — check the science fiction comics published under the Code and see how many stories you can find with Earthmen losing to aliens.

In Incredible Science Fiction No. 32 there was a beautifully drawn story (Al Williamson and Roy Krenkel did the art, Marie Severin did a sensitive and noteworthy coloring job) called "Food for Thought." The Code people objected that flying lizards shown in the background on the splash panel were satires on angels (!) and forced EC to add an eighth page to the seven-page story reversing the earthmen's defeat by an intelligent plant. This wrecked the budget for the issue, since a page of advertising had to be dropped.



The Comics Code took offense at "Judgement Day," because a BLACK astronaut is the hero of the story, which was, in fact, a parable speaking out *against* racial prejudice. The tale was reprinted by E.C. without Code permission.

With the next issue, the Code found one story wholly unacceptable. Publisher William M. Gaines decided to rerun one of EC's most popular stories, one which had been singled out for praise by Ray Bradbury. The story, "Judgment Day" (originally in Weird Fantasy No. 18) featured orange robots treating blue robots as inferiors and being visited by an Earthman inspecting the planet to see if it is ready to join the Galactic Republic. Because of the bigotry of the orange robots, Galactic citizenship is denied. In the last panel, the spaceman removes his helmet and is revealed as a Negro.

Well, said the Code, you certainly can't print that, unless you change the spaceman to a Caucasian. Gaines told the Code people they were biggots, said he would print it anyway and that if they objected he would make sure the reason for their objection got national coverage. With the cowardice of their convictions, the Code people backed down, the story was reprinted. Gaines then killed the book and turned his efforts to making a success of Mad as a magazine.

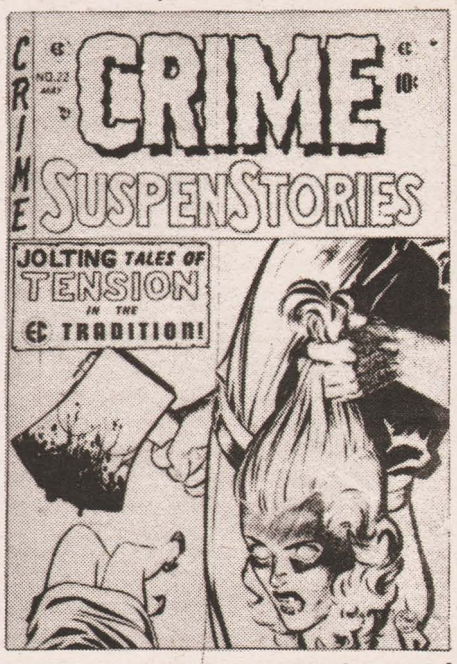
Mad got out of the comics because even it was not safe from the censors. A Charlie Chan satire in Panic, Mad's sister satirical comic, had at least one gag ruined when the Code had Charlie rip off a girl's hair when the obvious gag was to rip off her clothes — this is less objectionable?

"CHILDREN CALL THESE 'HEADLIGHTS' COMICS." If anyone out there knows what the Doc means by "headlights" comics, would they please let us know? We're getting scared that we might be missing something . . . .

"CORPSES OF COLORED PEOPLE STRUNG UP BY THEIR WRISTS," said the book's caption. These "frightened natives" would not be frightened if they were "corpses," as Dr. Wertham claims they are.

Another example of censorship as a point-killer came when a Jew was turned into a Christian in Impact No. 4. "The Lonely One" concerned a GI shunned by his fellow-soldiers because "his kind," who could be spotted by their names, were all cowards. His name, after the Code stepped in, was Miller, as innocuous and Anglo-Saxon as Smith. The soldier eventually proves himself a hero and the bigot who persecuted him becomes "the lonely one" but the story is meaningless as printed. Leonard Darvin told me in 1966 that it was possible that the editor, Albert Feldstein, decided to change the name on his own. SURE it's possible.

During the Congressional investigations of comic books in the 1953-54 period, Gaines was internationally quoted for a memorable remark in court. He was shown a Johnny Craig cover from Crime Suspense Stories showing a man holding a bloodied axe and the freshly severed head of a woman.



He was asked if that was in bad taste and he said no.

Asked what he would consider bad taste, Gaines said that it would be bad taste if the head were held higher so you could see the blood dripping from the neck.

Darvin, defending the Code against my charge of putting EC out of business (we debated at the 1966 New York ComiCon), said Gaines should be grateful to the Comics Code Authority for forcing him out of comics and into such a successful magazine publishing business. That's like a murderer saying you should thank him for killing your parents and making it pssible for you to inherit all their money.

Now, THAT is bad taste. ■

c 1964, E.C. Publications, Inc.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Peter Cushing as a risen corpse, seeking POETIC JUSTICE . . .

Jack Davis' rendering of the immortal Crypt-Keeper

From out of the pulsating pages of the late, great EC horror comics comes a horrific movie . . . (also out of MT No. 4 a sorta almost reprint of an ECish article called . . .)

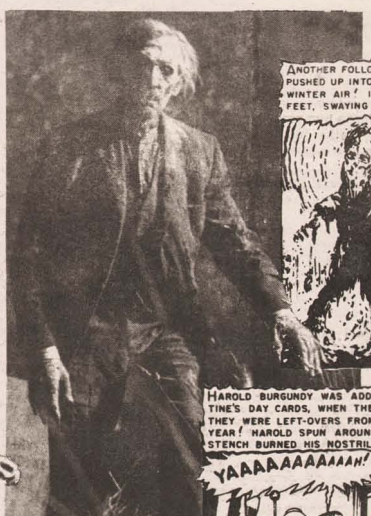
"TALES FROM THE CRYPT"

Yep, gang! You remember all those great EC comics of the early 1950's (How could you possibly forget with all these great illus on every page.) that have been reprinted as paperbacks and even now in hard-cover book form (HORROR COMICS OF THE 1950's)! Well, now five of those great old tales of murder and mutilation and corpses rising from the grave and demon-haunted catacombs and obstacle courses of walls covered with sharp, new, glistening razor blades, and-all-like-that-there! . . . have been turned into a feature-length film, starring some biggies in both the horror and the "respectable" acting fields.

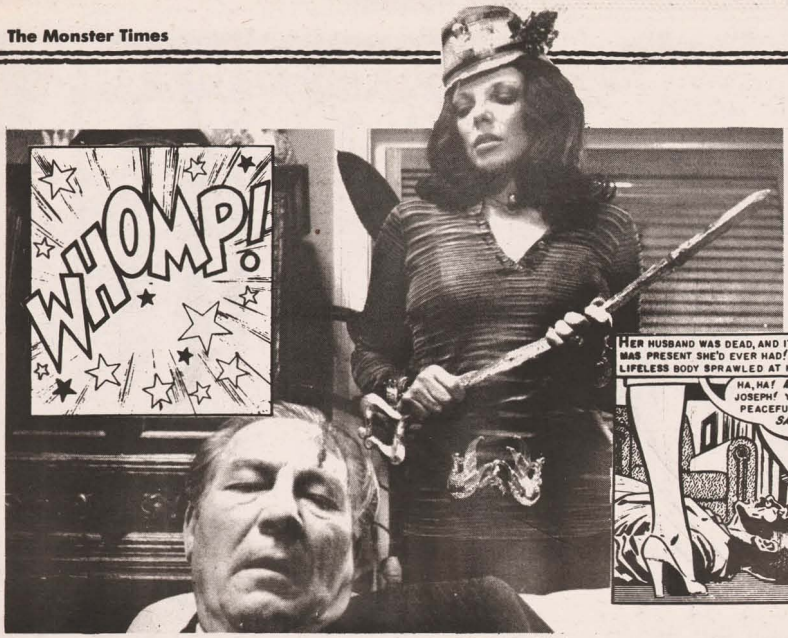
Sir Ralph Richardson as the Crypt-Keeper.

Sir Ralph Richardson, of all the "respectable" people you'd least expect to see, plays the Crypt-keeper. Not so much the pungently-punning black-humorist Crypt-keeper who obnoxiously enhanced the pages of the EC comix, but a somber, moody, satanic figure in a monk's robe, broodingly holding inquisition of souls as he sits before a huge skull-shaped altar. But Sir Ralph isn't really so "respectable" — the first film he appeared in was a 1932 shocker, **THE GHOUL**.

The Crypt-keeper introduces the tales, by questioning each of the main participants in the stories. Then we flash-back to each character's particular doings (mainly evil), and we see how "the evil that men do" not only "lives after them" but often even chases after them from the other side of the grave (or Crypt). And among the horrified living and vengeful undead hunters are "respectable" newcomers to horror **Joan Collins** (Mrs. Anthony Newley), **Patrick Magee** (currently making waves in **CLOCKWORK ORANGE** and **KING LEAR**), who puts in a remarkable performance as a blind



COMPARISON TIME: I think we'll all agree, class, that Mr. Cushing's modern makeup and performance very nicely emulates EC artist Graham "Ghastly" Ingels' eerie original 1952 version of the same tale; POETIC JUSTICE.



EC writer-artist Johnny Craig's "violent" 1954 comix version of his AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE . . . was far tamer than in the 1972 film. No blood 'n' split brains were shown in the "evil" comic books. Just a healthy old WHOMP!

"Merry Christmas, Luv" deadpanned Joan Collins to hubby Martin Boddey's dead pan.

man (one wonders if Mr. Magee could do a bad acting job if he TRIED) and **Richard Greene,** who used to only buckle swashes in TV's **ROBIN HOOD.**

But even great old horror veteran **Peter Cushing** does a turn-around in roles. Instead of either the classic monster, leering mad doctor, or the stuffy vampire-stalking police inspector, he plays instead a sympathetic, aging and kind-hearted garbage collector who repairs thrown-away toys and gives them to young children. Bet you weren't ready for that! But rest assured, before his segment is over, he takes on a more horrifying demeanor, as his photo reveals.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT had a "World Screamiere" on March 7th in New York City The producers heartily advised all potential audiences to put themselves into a fine mood for the occasion by "Shrieking their way into the theater," and that "A scream will get them passes into the house." (ABC T.V. covered the corn-ball event, but the MT staff missed it all that night . . . seems there was a **good** horror flick on channel 2 that nite).

But more news for old EC comix fans, the stories from **TALES FROM THE CRYPT,** which have already seen comic, and paperback-reprint form, have come to book form; a novelization treatment of the stories! So comix have evolved to prose. It's been shown in various studies (studies which weren't publicized until long after Senator Estes Kefauver and Frederick Wertham and the hypocritical Comics Code Authority had successfully **ram-rodded the EC horror and science fiction comics out of business) that the ghouls and**

MORE COMPARISON TIME: Nigel Patrick's resemblance to the superintendent of the home for the blind in the BLIND ALLEY segment, and George Evans' original 1954 interpretation, drawn nearly two decaying decades ago.

murderers and undead and bug-eyed-monsters in the EC stories actually encouraged kids back in the 1950's to develop their reading skills, and to discover the many fantastic universes of wonder and horror to be found in prose stories. It's really ironic that the very comix which certain government officials and rival publishing companies conspired against to put out of business, should have this double tribute, yea, honor! of both film and prose adaptation. Those **who learned to appreciate prose, reading EC comix, can come full circle,** reading EC prose.

The EC comix frequently ran stories of the dead having their final justice, a horrifying vengeance, often a return from the crypt or tomb or burial plot to have the last Ghastly laugh. And **Bill Gaines** and **Al Feldstein** (who now put out **MAD**) can revel in the final gloating glory . . . giggling all the way to the bank. For it seems that **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** will be a horrific hit.

Let's face it; no one's ever going to make a successful movie about the Comics Code Authority — **let alone about the late** Senator **Estes** Kefauver (who him?) ■

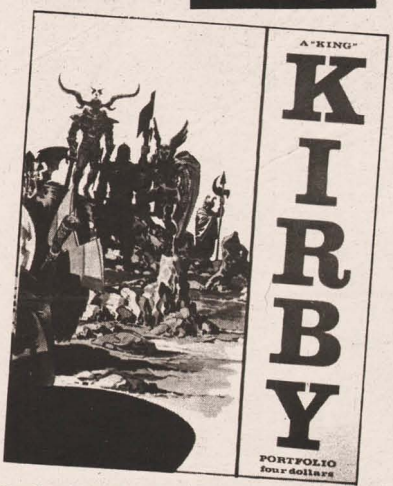
THE OLD ABANDONED WAREHOUSE!

THE OLD ABANDONED WAREHOUSE is here! Now you can order rare and hard-to-get books about monsters, comics, pulps, fantasy and assorted betwitching black sundries. Some of the items are for older fan enthusiasts, and some ask you to state age when purchasing. Don't be put off by the formality, the pulsating Post Office isn't.

ALTER EGO 10. A professionally done fanzine heavily oriented to articles. Covered are such subjects as Gil Kane, Joe Kubert (and Tor), and Comic Conventions. Well chosen art and photos accompany the text. $1.50

ALL KINES COMICS. A delightful potpourri of artwork ranging from underground to sword and sorcery. Artists include Dennis Nolan and Robert Crumb. Color covers, 64 pages. $1.00

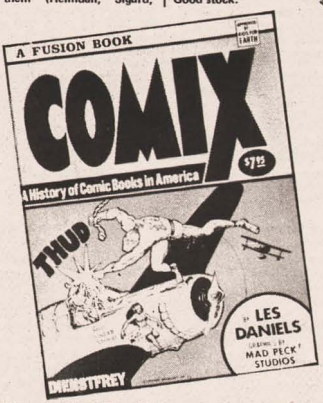
SCREEN FACTS 23/24 (double issue). This is a prize for horror film fans. The entire issue (50 + pages) consists of magnificent full-page stills from Universal horror films. Look again at Karloff, Dwight Frye, Rondo Hatton, and many grisly others. $3.00



KIRBY POSTERS. The gods of Jack Kirby's new pantheon, four of them (Heimdall, Sigurd, Baldiur, Honir) in glorious Kirbycolor, on 11 x 17 posters. Good stock. $3.00

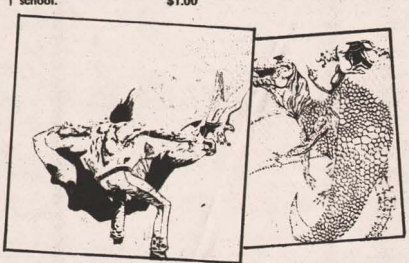
FUJITAKE. A thin 16-page booklet (8½ x 11) featuring the gothic black-and-white style of Denis Fujitake, an artist of the Jeff Jones-Berni Wrightson school. $1.00

PORT OF PERIL by Otis Adebert Kline. A hard-cover re-issue of a famous science-fiction novel located on Venus. Of special interest are the four illustrations by J. Allen St. John, one of the great masters of fantasy art. $3.00



COMIX: A HISTORY OF COMIC BOOKS IN AMERICA. This is an attractive hard-cover book covering the comic book phenomenon up to today's undergrounds, a territory not previously explored in any history of the field. Thoroughly illustrated in both black-and-white and color, the books appeal extends even to its bright-colored dust-jacket. $7.95

DIG YOUR OWN GRAVE. Rob Macintyre is a Canadian artist who is young and very talented. His work is collected in a series of 21 full-page drawings done in a textured, dramatic, and stylized manner. Startling portraits of Patrick McGoohan (the Prisoner), Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, and fantasy themes. $2.50



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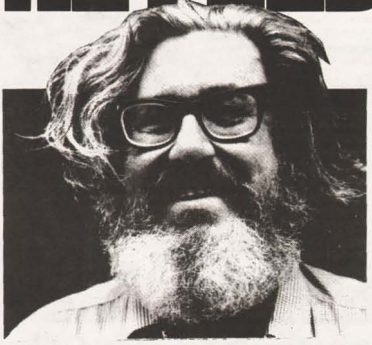
AMOUNT ENCLOSED_____ AGE_____

(c) 1971, William M. Gaines

Yes, almost the whole crowd of madmen are here . . . All them ghouls and goblins who put the E.C. Comics together, in this quiet little drawing. The drawing was done by the guy in the boy-scout hat on the right . . . jumpin' John Severin.

A MONSTER TIMES INTERVIEW WITH BILL GAINES & AL FELDSTEIN



WILLIAM M. GAINES . . . "Publisher of the late great EC Horror Comics of the early fifties and who disguised as publisher of MAD MAGAZINE, fights a never ending battle for truth, justice and the American way." That's what the dust-jacket of the hard-cover E.C. Horror Comics book says of the Madman pictured above, and you know what? we agree!

Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein started the EC horror, suspense and science fiction comic lines. Bill Gaines now publishes MAD magazine. Al Feldstein (who once did an imitation of the MAD comic book for EC called PANIC, because every *other* comic book company was imitating MAD) now is editor of MAD magazine.

Bill Gaines these days looks like a hippy Santa Claus, replete with a thatch of pepper and salt hair and mamoth beard and the proverbial twinkle in his eye. To look at him, you'd never guess any of these things: (1)—he's rich beyond belief, (2) because he publishes MAD magazine, (3) which he does, because he was forced to abandon his EC horror comics line, (4) which he pioneered in the 1950's when he inherited a line of indistinguished comic books from his father, (5) M.C. Gaines, who is called the Johnny Appleseed of comics, for helping to found several different comic book companies.

Your MONSTER TIMES interviewer met Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein at the MAD magazine office up on MADison Avenue here in New Yawk, New Yawk. In he sauntered, tape recorder in hand, down a long hallway, lined with the original paintings for MAD magazine covers, each several times the size it appeared in print. At the end of the hallway, was the office of Mr. William M. Gaines.

Ye Gods! The first thing one notices as he enters what was intended to be a respectable office is KING KONG!, sticking his snout at you through a window. Nope, gang, not a painting, but a papier-mache sculpture of the old giant ape himself, his mouth perpetually baring fangs and dripping red tonsils in an eternal snort!

Your MT interviewer wanted to glom on all the other goodies in Bill Gaines' office, like an oil painting by Graham "Ghastly" Ingels of the Old Witch, strolling thru a grave yard poking her way from one tombstone to another; and an oil painting of the Vault-Keeper, by Johnny Craig;

Continued on page 18

TERROR

AN ENTERTAINING EC COMIC

TALES FROM THE CRYPT®

NO. 38
OCT.-NOV.

10¢

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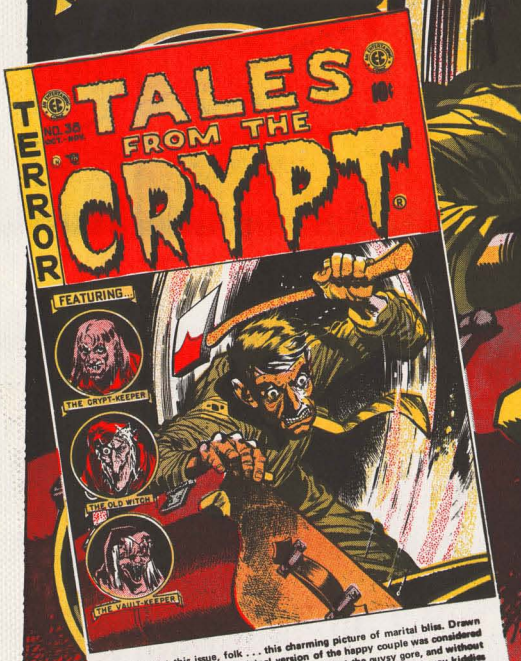
FEATURING...

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

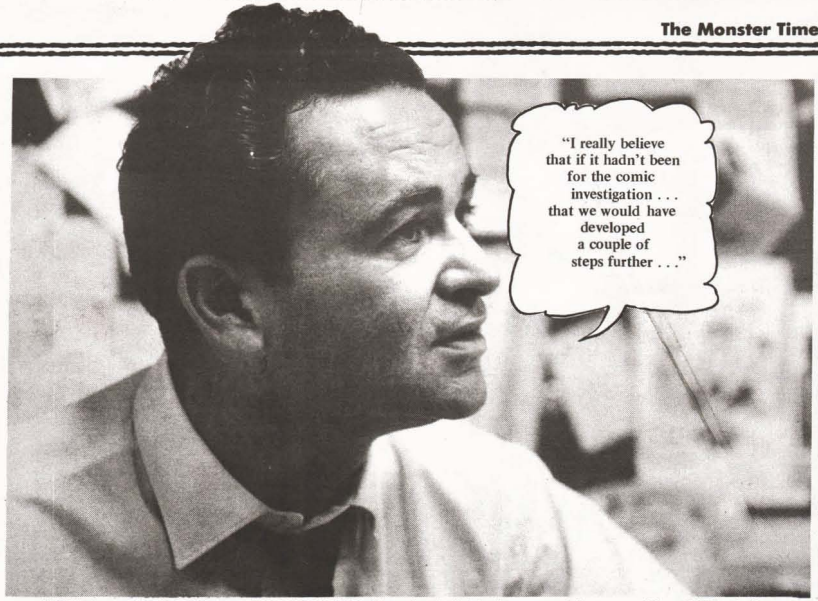


Special treat this issue, folk . . . this charming picture of marital bliss. Drawn by daring Jack Davis, the original version of the happy couple was considered TOO hairy even for E.C. So it was redone, with-ut the guysy gore, and without Davis' name! Isn't it grand what TMT can dig up? . . . And aren't you kiddies glad you axed for an All E.C. Issue?

TH[illegible]ULT-KEEPER

GAINES & FELDSTEIN

Continued from page 15



Al Feldstein, now the editor of the successful MAD MAGAZINE! We wonder what he's looking so sorrowfully at . . . certainly not MAD's sales figures.

and another painting, by Al Feldstein, of astronauts exploring the moon, painted back in the mid-50's, the astronauts are crawling from one of the old finned-bullet rocket ships of Sci-Fi yore, not a space capsule. Yes, your MT interviewer wanted to glom on all that there good stuff, as well as the dozens of MAD blimps strung from the celing, but Bill Gaines instead ushered your MT interviewer into Al Feldstein's office, which features more original paintings from MAD covers, Al Feldstein at his desk, and a picture-window view of smog-laden Madison Avenue.

There, the interview began, after your MT interviewer had set up the tape recorder, and jumped right in with the first question;

TMT: How did the horror comics start?

BILL: Al suggested putting two new features in two of our crime books, entitled The Vault of Horror and The Crypt of Terror. We did spooky type stories, suspense type stories, and after doing this for two issues, we switched the titles from CRIME PATROL and WAR AGAINST CRIME into THE CRYPT OF TERROR and THE VAULT OF HORROR. THE CRYPT OF TERROR, after three issues was changed to TALES FROM THE CRYPT.

This is a slightly light-headed Johnny Craig dealing justice to a manequin that looks strangely like big Bill Gaines.

AL: Yeah, and there was Bill's work as a publisher. To this time he'd been under the influence of his business associates. And Bill decided, I guess my prodding was part of it, let somebody follow us for a change, because the way it worked–the leaders in the field always stayed the leaders. When **CRIME DOES NOT PAY** *came out, it was the leader, no matter what crime books came out following it. They would die eventually and* **CRIME DOES NOT PAY** *was still making a lot of money. And we decided, let them follow us. So we took off on something we had great faith in and started a new title. Bill put the money into it, and that's step one in becoming a mature publisher.*

BILL: We had a great feeling for the horror, and having a feeling for it of course, we did a better job. And that's why our horror and our science fiction and our suspense was possibly the best stuff that was being done at the time, simply because we loved what we were doing. And Harvey (Kurtzman) came along and was doing war books–he loved what he was doing too, so they reflected that. The whole line became books that we wanted to publish. Fortunately they became books that someone wanted to buy.

AL: Well the science fiction–ha, ha–

BILL: Well, later on the science fiction wasn't selling and we were supporting it with the profits from the horror and suspense magazines. We loved it so much, we kept publishing it even at a loss. This was also true of Kurtzman's war books. After the Korean War was over, war books stopped selling, but we kept publishing for a while because they were so good.

TMT: What were the working sessions like? I've read in your book about brain storming, writing a complete story a day.

AL: That's right.

TMT: It must have been like a mini renaissance going on, gathering all the precious talent about and sitting down and writing the stuff.

AL: What precious talent? Bill and I wrote all the stories except for the ones that Johnny Craig plotted with Bill.

TMT: I meant precious art talent!

AL: Oh, well, as far as the art talent is concerned that was something that developed in terms of developing each individual artist to do his individual style. Now this was something that hadn't been done too much in the comics either. There was imitation of styles. And books were sterile and really had no character. We encouraged each artist to develop his own style, actually wrote and tailored the stories based on the artist's ability and style. Graham always did the Old Witch and kind of gothicy stuff. And a finished, neat artist like Jack Kamen did the modern, triangle stories with a husband and wife living in the suburbs behind a picket fence, because his style lent himself to that.

BILL: I thought it was more than that. When we sat down to write a story, we were writing the story for a particular artist. So one day we sat down to write a story I would say to Al: "Today we have a seven page story for Graham Ingels to write." We would think in that direction. And the same thing with Kamen, to take the two extremes. If we sat down to write a 7 page Kamen story, it had to be for Kamen. Therefore,

Here's a very early shot of the Ghastly one, Graham (Horor we, how's by him) Ingels.

we thought along those lines automatically. Naturally, if we're utilizing the strong points of every artist deliberately, right there, you're gonna start off with a big advantage.

AL: Yeah, but you know what you're skipping over? The fact that this was a revolutionary kind of working in the comic field. I don't think anybody every worked this way.

BILL: Everything was tailor made.

AL: Right, I don't think artists were encouraged to break out into their own styles. When Jack Davis walked into our office with his nutty style, we encouraged him to work in that style.

BILL: That was your doing. You encouraged him to work in that style, I had nothing to do with it.

AL: Okay, but the point is, that is why our books had a look about them. Each artist was working his own way. When Harvey Kurtzman walked in and we first started to use him in the crime and in the science fiction, we encouraged him to work in his style. And his style was unique in comics at that time. And Berni Krigstein came long after we were doing things and he had a whole new revolutionary way of working. He was encouraged.

BILL: Up to a point–ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

AL: Well, yeah, but I think, I really believe, that if it hadn't been for the comic investigation, and if Berni Krigstein had started to work with us, that we would have developed the art a couple of steps further. It was apparent in some of the things that he was doing.

BILL: Oh yes, don't misunderstand that. What I'm trying to say is Berni invariably went beyond what we had hoped that he would do.

AL: But the point is that we permitted it.

BILL: We didn't permit it, we didn't have much choice. He just did it. Berni kind of forced the issue.

AL: Yeah, but I acknowledged the talent.

BILL: You couldn't deny the talent Al, but had he asked permission to do what he did in "Master Race," I think I would have said "No." He didn't ask, he just did it. He chopped the whole goddamn story up, and pasted it back together his own way.

Ed. Note: "Master Race" can be seen in the E.C. HORROR LIBRARY reviewed in this issue.

AL: But I think he demonstrated something that might have been very . . .

BILL: Oh yes, he demonstrated that he knew what he was doing, but I'm just saying that . . .

AL: Well, in any case, this was the way we worked. We were open-minded.

TMT: Getting into the earlier statement, about having afinity for the horror and the crime and suspense stories, where did that afinity come from? Mainly from the pulps and radio? Who were your favorite authors when you were growing up?

AL: Well, from a visual point of view, I remember the old horror movies. I saw the first Frankenstein, Dracula, and the ones that followed. Gee, I don't remember if I was influenced that much by horror writers. The strange thing was that I started to read horror only after I started to write the stuff. When it came to science fiction, my writing of science fiction was my introduction to it. Bill introduced me to some of the writers.

Continued on page 30

Jack Kamen, an artist who drew great dames–but rotten horror, drew Gaines and Feldstein into a story parodying his plight. It was aptly entitled "Kamen's Kalamity," where Kamen turns into a werewolf, and even then he couldn't draw horror!

GILL-MAN GETS PENNED IN!

Dear Sirs:

The Monster Times is really REALLY great! I have never seen anything like it. Keep up the fantastic work. Format wise TMT needs no changing. Leave it like it is.

I've followed your mag since No. 1, and it gets better every day. You guys must have a pretty big staff to cover all the in-depth reports you print. They're just great.

Because of your big article on THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK

LAGOON, I am enclosing a drawing I have done of the Gill-Man. Hope you can use it.

Best,
Ted Richichi

Dear Ted:

Yes, we can use . . . and ARE (like right here!) printing . . . your sketch. Glad to hear TMT inspires you. We sure dig getting art & pix from all our readers . . . keep sending those cards & creatures in.

●■●

TWICE AS NICE?

Dear MT,

I very much enjoyed "Hot Prints Anyone?" by Gary Gerani in No. 7. Being an avid collector of posters, pressbooks, lobbies, etc., I'd like to see an article on this phase of fandom. My subscription has yet to reach No. 7, but on seeing it on the newsstand several days ago I picked it up without even thinking it'll be coming in the mail shortly. I plan now on buying two copies of every issue because who knows what kind of collectors items they'll be in the future. Keep up the good work.

Best Wishes,
John Antosiewicz,
Perth Amboy, N.J.

Gee, John, you turn our gory little heads with that much praise. Don't stop, though, we kind of like it!

COMICS AS EDUCATION

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you to tell you how much I appreciated your response for my letter asking about the educational value of comics. Our side of the group which was for comics won by a landslide of the vote. (And to think that when I proposed we have this debate the class thought it childish.) Well here's how the debate went: Two groups consisting of three people each, those for and those against. Each group had to get information on the topic and prove his belief. The jury consisted of five classes (about 110 people). They were the first to speak, they thought they had us beat! They came up with articles from books, quotes by psychiatrists and all that bunch, (and I'll bet those dudes never read **The Monster Times.**) I got mad, seeing how little some people think of comics! Then it was our turn and did our side put on a show! I started by surprising everybody by reading your letter, on each from Stan Lee, Carmine Infantino, Jack Kirby, and Sal Gentile. The auditorium was all kinds of quiet. Then we hit them with a presentation on the screen of my artwork and as I explained the ideas from each page, my friend and co-artist friend Joe Suzzolion played the Three Dog Night record "Family of Man" on a stereo set all through the intercom of the school!! The jury was rolling with enthusiasm! The principal of the school was there and he surprised us all by ordering all the English classes down to see the debate! All of this was made possible thanks to you and all your great staff, to whom I say Thank You.

Frank Alarcon,
Newark, New Jersey

We thank YOU, Frank for giving us the opportunity to defend comics in public. We have always felt that comic books are more than just an entertainment medium. As we mentioned to you in your letter, comics are used as reading aids all over the country. And, our converage of EC comics uncovered the facts that back in the 1950's, EC had anti-drug, anti-racial-discrimination and anti-pollution stories before they became popular.

●■●

A LUGOSI LOVER

Dear Editor,

I have been reading your newspaper since it first came out, and so I thought that I would drop you this letter and let you know how much I enjoy it.

Your articles are well done and very informative. The posters are great, King Kong is the best yet!

I am a Dracula fan at heart and among those who hold the memory of Bela Lugosi very dear. I have many thoughts on the subject of Mr. Lugosi, but for now I just wish to say this; Lugosi was the Prince of evil, the likes of which we will never behold again. We all know that Boris Karloff was great, of this there is no question but let us also give credit where

credit is due and Bela Lugosi is long over due for it. Think for a moment, what would have happened if Lugosi had not turned down the role of Frankensteins monster? This man deserves the recognition he never got.

John R. Duffer

While we agree that Lugosi was the greatest, how can you say he didn't get enough publicity? Lugosi as Dracula is a classic the world over.

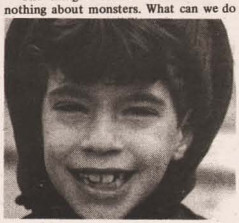
This sketch came lumbering into our office one day last week on its own steam . . . no letter . . . just a name (J. Jusko), address (N.Y.C.), and an age (only 13). We dug the drawing enough to share it with all our readers.

THE BOOK OF UN-KNOWLEDGE!

Dear Monster Times,

I enjoy your newspaper very much. A few weeks ago my parents bought me the **Encyclopedia Britannica.**

The thing I dislike is that there is nothing about monsters. What can we do



about it? Please send in a letter to them and ask them why there is not a thing about monsters. Frankenstein, Superman and Godzilla are my favorites.

David Biderman
New York City

We don't know if Superman counts as a monster, but we think that if everyone wrote a letter to the company, we're sure that they'd put in some monsters for us. Even smart people like monsters!

●■●

MT: A FIERY ISSUE!

Dear Editor:

Let me be the first to shake your claw! "Monster Times" is the hottest thing on the newstands. (I'm not kidding! It took our fire department 1/2 hour to put out the stand in town!)

In all seriousness, your mag/newspaper is a fresh new way to look at the monster scene. No truer words were ever said when a letter writer in *MT* #4 stated: **"Famous Monsters** is all reprints and **Castle of Frankenstein** has dropped in

quality sharply after No. 13 issue and gone downhill ever since." I, for one, am fed up with **F.M.** and **C.O.F. Monster Times** is a blessing to us horror and fantasy lovers. Long live **Monster Times.**

Reader forever,
Tim Ferrante
Keyport, N.J.

Thank your Fire Department for us, Tim. And don't worry about *FM* and *COF*. They're all burned up about us already!

●■●

MT HITS THE TURNPIKE

Dear Editor:

This is to thank you for the nifty first issue. I picked it up in New Haven and on my return trip to school in Washington, it helped me avoid most of the New Jersey Turnpike. I had been waiting a long time for such a publication, but I never did believe one would ever materialize. It's given the Star Trek Society at A.U. quite a treat (Actually, we refer to ourselves as the Enterprise Ground Crew).

Obviously, Star Trek did and still does mean many things to many different people. Fantasy. Science Fiction. Adventure. We can re-create the past with westerns, mass-produce the present with the situation-comedy, but only in the future can we make credible our supposed human capacity for brotherhood. Had "Star Trek" shown only the great technological strides in whiz-bam gadgetry, instead of eclipsing this with the human outcome of 200 years, I doubt it would have claimed such a following as it did. Or, shall I say, still does. Keep up the lunacy.

Vicky Dann
Washington D.C.

Nice to hear from a female fan, Vicky! Glad to know we helped you 'round the bend. Live long and prosper!

Send us so many letters, postcards, boosts, detractions, bomb threats, etc., that the Post Office will have to deliver our mail with a bulldozer. Address all correspondence to: THE MONSTER TIMES, Box 595, Old Chelsea Station, N.Y., 10011.

I WANT YOU FOR THE EC CON!

"Heh, heh! . . . No gettin' away from me, kiddies, it's YOU I want! So come on down, to . . . Heeee, hee . . . No, not that far down. Just far enuff to get you to The Hotel McAlpin right smack dab in the middle of Fumin' Fun City. Breathe all that putrescent air deeply, gang . . . you don't get much of it out in them open spaces! See ya!"

Comic conventions are fun for a while. After you've been to four or five, though, they begin to mesh into a mold of sameness, banality, if you will. At every convention you see the same people, the same professionals and the same items for sale. This is especially true in the big city areas where conventions flourish.

But, the **EC FAN ADDICT CONVENTION** (we hope) will be a welcome breath of fresh air. You've already read how great E.C. was and the convention will give you a chance to say hello and rap to the people who made it great. People who you normally don't see at conventions. People who, even after twenty years, still respect EC for what they are; The best comics ever produced!

Most of the creators will be there. **Bill Gaines** and **Al Feldstein** will be there. Many of the great artists **(Krenkel, Williamson, Kurtzman, Elder, Wood and Kamen)** will definitely be there. Many more are expected to attend. It's going to be a bash comic lovers haven't seen in years.

The convention is being held in New York City at the Hotel McAlpin, located at Broadway and 34th Street, from May 26th to May 29th. The convention planners are expecting a minimum of 1000 fan-addicts, with expected attendance reaching 2000. Price for admission is $5 for all four days, or $2 a day.

Now, to the best part, what you get for your hard-earned dollars: Saturday, there will be an **EC HORROR PANEL**, an **EC WAR PANEL**, an auction and a screening of Harvey Kurtzman's old movies on the EC crowd.

Sunday offers an **EC SCIENCE FICTION PANEL and an Awards Presentation** (in which all members of the convention are allowed to vote). Monday, the final day, is when the convention planners will spring a surprise **EC PANNEL** on us, and we won't even try and guess what will be going on there.

And, even if you hate EC comics (perish the thought) there is something for you. Classic old horror movies will be shown free at the convention. They include; **THE HORROR OF DRACULA, BUCKET OF BLOOD, DOCTOR X, and CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN.** And, the current smash hit blood curdler, **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** will be shown three times (twice Saturday and once Sunday). Free of charge, no less!

Now aren't you glad you're going to the convention.

There are also other goodies that the convention folk will be serving up for you. By special arrangement with Bill Gaines, an entire room of the convention will be overflowing with E.C. original art. These classic drawings have NEVER been on display (Mr. Gaines keeps them in a locked vault) and probably will never be shown again. It may be your lone chance to see all the beautiful EC art in it's original size.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

HOTEL MC ALPIN — NEW YORK CITY
MAY 26-29, 1972

Let us entertain you at the first annual...

E.C. Fan-Addict Convention

And, for you limited-edition collectors, there will be a beautiful 92 page **EC CONVENTION BOOK**, which will be on sale for $4 (perhaps a bit high . . . but take a peek anyway) at the convention. It's filled with **interviews with the EC people, reprints of old EC stories**, and, to ice the cake, **an original Wally Wood cover** drawn especially for the convention.

Now that we've told you what's going to happen at the convention, how can you possibly not attend. As usually there will be a large dealer area where anything and everything will be on sale. But we may inject a note of caution: EC comics will probably be very high so be careful.) There will be dozens of items besides EC comics and fanzines, too!

And, if you still aren't convinced, we can only offer one other item. If EC doesn't enthrall you, art bores you, and horror flicks turn you off, then you can always come just to see the hard-working staff of **THE MONSTER TIMES.** We'll be the ones trying to date the three witches! ■

—JOE BRANKATELLI

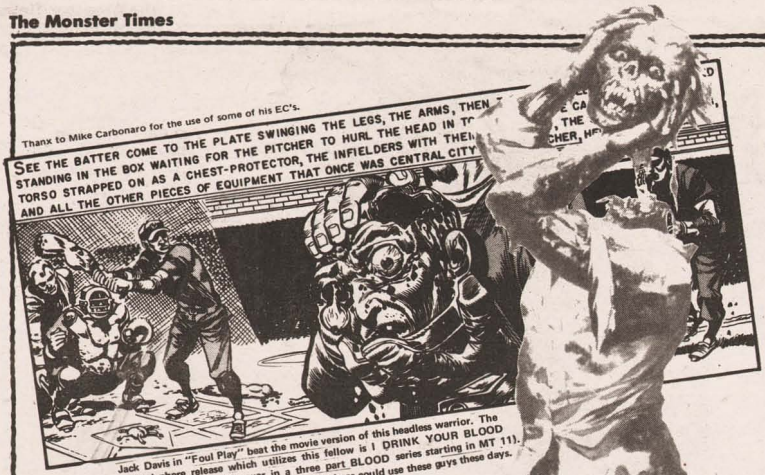
Thanx to Mike Carbonaro for the use of some of his EC's.

If the good Dr. only knew...

BY JOE BRANCATELLI

Funny how comics and movies play off each other. They say creative people are hard to find. They're right! But there seems to be a multitude of creative copiers (nothing new under the sun and all that there . . .)

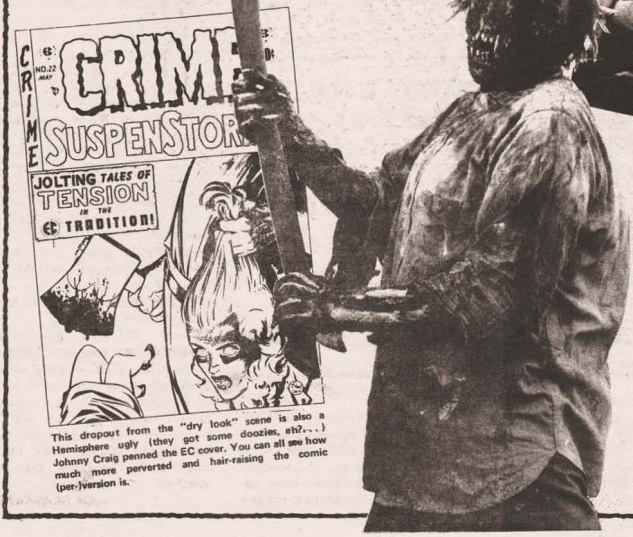
So thanks to the vast MONSTER TIMES research staff (3 old ladies), here are some very interesting comparisons between E.C. comics and movies (remembering that E.C. comics ruin your mind, pervert your desires and make you a juvenile delinquint . . . The movies are okay, though . . . expecially the "X" jobs!)



Jack Davis in "Foul Play" beat the movie version of this headless warrior. The Hemisphere release which utilizes this fellow is I DRINK YOUR BLOOD (which MT will cover in a three part BLOOD series starting in MT 11). The Yankees could use these guys these days.

"Ghastly" drew John Barrymore as he looked in the flick, DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE. In the comic story "Horror We, How's Bayou, the Barrymore character is named Everett and has a penchant for dismembering people . . . but with lots of etiquette (see MT 6 for the lowdown on the comic story).

Wally Wood copped this pose from Albert Dekker and Charles Halton in the amazing, shrinking DR. CYCLOPS. Wood's story was entitled "My World" and was a story typifying the "hope that springs eternal." We're not so sure about the movie . . .



This dropout from the "dry look" scene is also a Hemisphere ugly (they got some doozies, eh?. . .) Johnny Craig penned the EC cover. You can all see how much more perverted and hair-raising the comic (per-)version is.

Seems as if both Al Feldstein and Lon Chaney Sr. shared the same dentist in the old days . . . and probably the same root canal work too. Lon played a mean piano in "THE PHANTOM," while his counterpart . . . well, he just played MEAN.

the Monster Times Teletype

. . . Prints news, reviews, previews, grues-flashes ferreted out by BILL FERET, Monsterdom's answer to Rona Barret. Bill is in show-biz; a singer, dancer, actor and has many contacts in the domain of Entertainment; films, TV, live stage, and all like that. Where other monsterpubs get news to you months after a film's already been released, Bill Feret's TELETYPE lives up to its name, and reveals to you info of horror flix & cetera when they're still only in production. Impress friend and fiend alike with inside info on monster movies that haven't even been made yet! Gosharootie, gang!

Rising Spanish horror star Paul Naschy can't help but wonder where he's bound in this scene from one of his many recent fright flicks.

Henry Farrell, who wrote "Baby Jane," has in the works "SHOCKING," a little horror gem concerning two sisters trying to do each other in. The lovely ladies may be (and "lovely" they are) Ava Gardner and Lana Turner.

Domiano Domiani is set to film "THE TORTURERS." This "pizza pic" stars the very lovely Florinda Bolkan.

There's to be a feature film presentation based on the long-running Australian television series "HOMICIDE."

The legendary Liz Taylor is set to star in the celluloid version of the Broadway thriller "NIGHT WATCH." Laurence Harvey plays the heavy. Joan Hackett essayed the heroine's role on the stage and received rave reviews.

Scheduled for filming in '73 is "GETTING RID OF MR. STRAKER." Roger Moore, Lee Remick, Orson Welles and Terry-Thomas are starring, with locations shooting in London.

"DADDY YOU KILLED ME," by playwright Nick Cosentino, is due for release soon.

I don't know just who Paul Naschy is, but he's starring in . . . . "THE CRIMES OF DR. PETIOT," "DR. JEKYLL VS. THE WEREWOLF," and "THE HYENA."

All Spanish productions set for filming all over the world. Mr. Naschy's going to be very busy, they've been calling him "The Spanish Christopher Lee."

My illusive notes concerning a film called "LADY FRANKENSTEIN" proved true after all . . . sort of . . . it's not doing much business in Dayton, Ohio. But there just how much business can one find in Dayton, Ohio?

The **1973 LUNACON**, the largest general science-fiction convention on the East Coast, will be held April 20 – 22 next year. For information on this important fan function, contact: Al Schuster, P.O. Box 95, New York, N.Y., 10011. (With Al doin' it, we hope it will be better than this year's!)

Stella Stevens and Jim Brown are co-starred in AIP's new production called "SLAUGHTER."

Just winding up shootong on "SUPER INVISIBLE MAN," Star Dean Jones will essay the role of "BARON VON MUNCHAUSEN," . . . if they can find him!

French film actor, Jean Louis Trintignant, who is currently starring in the who-dun-it murder mystery "WITHOUT APPARENT MOTIVE" is slated to star in a new film, "ONE FINE DAY." The new flick deals with the son of a butcher who revenges his father's death by killing the nine men who sentenced him to die. (Ah, but who will clean up the mass . . . murder?) (The more the bury-er?)

"MAN FOR ALL SEASONS" *director, Fred Zinneman will direct Universal's "DAY OF THE JACKAL."*

Also Robert Altman (MASH, BREWSTER McCLOUD) will be directing "IMAGES." This macabre entry stars Susannah York and the bird-professor from BREWSTER McCLOUD, *Rene Auberjonois.*

All existing prints of the classic Fay Wray film of 1933, "THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM," were thought to have been lost or destroyed, until the American Film Institute in Washington discovered one, just one print of the rare two-color Technicolor film in excellent condition. This was the film upon which "HOUSE OF WAX" was based.

Michael Greer, late of "FORTUNE AND MEN'S EYES," has the starring role in a new Gothic chiller titled "THE NIGHT OF THE BLOOD MOON."

Filming starts next fall on "FIFTY-FIFTY" with an original screenplay by Eric Roth. It's half horror and half terror.

Pittsburgh based (Pittsburgh?) film company Latent Image, Inc., who last gave us "NIGHT OF THE LIVING-DEAD," have completed production on a thriller titled "JACK'S WIFE" and are starting production on "THE CRAZIES," concerning bacteriological warfare. Surprised they didn't call it "NIGHT OF THE KILLING BUG!"

If you've ever wanted to be a butcher, this is the one to be, Richard Burton will be playing the role of "BLUEBEARD." He'll be eliminating such lovely lovelies as Raquel Welch (That'll take some doing), Virna Lisi, Nathalie Delon, Marilu Tolo, and Joey Heatherton. If his beard is blue, it's probably because he's sorry.

United Artists will bready for release in June "EVIL EYE." Pic will lens in Manila in color. Femme lead is none other than the very beauteous Antoinette Bower who you may remember as the sultry sorceress in the STAR TREK episode by Robert Bloch entitled "CATSPAW." Aubrey Schenck is Producer. Mr. Schenck will then go into production on "DAUGHTERS OF SATAN," which will be a witchcraftian opus.

CON-CALENDAR

DATE	CONVENTION	LOCATION	PRICE	FEATURES
May 26-29 FRI, SAT, SUN & MON	E.C. FAN-ADDICT CONVENTION 2623 Silver Court East Meadow, N.Y. 11554	HOTEL McALPIN Broadway & 34th Street New York City	Various Prices Write Con For More Information	THE GREATEST HORROR COMIX OF ALL TIME
JUNE 11	THE SECOND SUNDAY PHIL SEULING 2883 W. 12 B'KLYN, N.Y. 11224	STATLER-HILTON 33rd ST & 7th AVE. NEW YORK CITY	$1.00 (10 A.M. to 4 P.M.)	COMIC BOOK DEALERS & COLLECTORS No Special Guests
JUNE 9-11 FRI., SAT., SUN.	PULP-CON ED. WESSEL BOX 15853, OVERLAND BRANCH ST. LOUIS, MO. 63114	COLONY HOTEL 7730 BON HOMME Clayton, Mo.	$2—Sprt. $4—Advnc. $6—At Door	PULPS & AUTHORS Philip Jose Farmer Edmond Hamilton & others.
JULY 1-5 SAT. THRU WED.	NEW YORK COMICON PHIL SEULING 2883 W. 12 B'KLYN, N.Y. 11224	STATLER-HILTON 33rd ST & 7th AVE. NEW YORK CITY	Info. Not Available Write Con.	Meet Comic Book and Comic Strip Artists, and THOUSANDS of Fans Like Yourself for 5 DAYS!

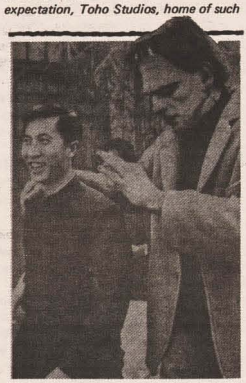
The CON-CALENDAR is a special exclusive feature of THE MONSTER TIMES. Across this great land of ours are quaint and curious gatherings of quaintly curious zealots. The gatherings called "conventions," and the zealots, called "fans," deserve the attention of fans and non-fans alike, hence this trail-blazing reader-service.

To those readers who've never been to one of these hair-brained affairs, we recommend it. Detractors of such events put them down by saying that they're just a bunch of cartoonists and science fiction writers and comic book publishers talking, and signing autographs for fans who, like maniacs, spend sums on out-of-date comics, science fiction pulps, and monster movie stills. But that's just the reason for going. If you want a couple of glossy pictures of Dracula or King Kong, or a 1943 copy of Airboy Comics (God alone knows why) or if you wish to see classic horror and science fiction films, or meet the stars of old time movie serials, or today's top comic book artist and writers—or if you just want to meet other monster or comics science fiction freaks, like yourself, and learn you're not alone in the world, OR if you want to meet the affable demented lunatics who bring out THE MONSTER TIMES, go ahead and visit one of those conventions. We dare ya!

"THE ETRUSCAN KILLS AGAIN" *(when was he here before?) stars Alex Cord, Samantha Eggar and John (*LOVE STORY*'s Daddy) Marley. It's double billed with "*BLOODY BUTTERFLY." *(Can't be very colorful.) How about "*GODZILLA SINGS?" *Well, no, not really, let me further explain lest you have a sudden burst of euphoric expectation, Toho Studios, home of such oriental monsters as Godzilla, Rodan, Mothra, etc., will be filled with the strains from the score of the new cinama musical, "*MARCO." *It will surely be a borderline fantasy film with Toho in top form with its miniature masterpieces and super special effects. Zero Mostel will ably portray the Great Kublai Kahn and Desi Arnaz, Jr. will essay the role of Mr. Polo, inventor of the shortsleeve shirt.*

*Watch for Peter Brooks celluloid version of his stage triumph, "*MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM." *Columbia will lens this Shakespearean piece and has also obtained the rights to a contemporary version of "*LILIOM," *which served as the basis for the calssic musical-fantasy "*CAROUSEL."

*Federico Fellini may be filming "*THE VOYAGE OF MASTORNA," *a fantasy about death and resurrection. He plans for it to be his final authobiographical film.* ■



Since no one we know reads **THE NEW YORK POST**, we thought you might like to see this item that appeared on it's front page, on Tuesday, April 25, 1972. Is this what we traded two musk ox for? We think President Nixon should go back and demand at least two ping pong players.

Conventions are getting longer and more exciting this year. **THE DETROIT TRIPLE FAN FAIR & STAR TREK CON**, will be on October 19 – 22 this year. Held at the Detroit Hilton and Towers, one of the fanciest hotels in the city, it will be a combined treat this year. For comics fans, the guest of honor will be **Neal Adams** (**Jim Steranko** may also be on hand). And, for sci-fi and film fans everywhere, extra-special-fantastic-surprise-guest will be **Gene Roddenberry** (and possibly Mrs. Roddenberry, the former Majel . . . **Nurse Chapel** . . . Barrett). A fantastic film program, including a great many **Star Trek** episodes, and a $100 prize for the best masquerade costume, promise to make this an exceptional Con. Write to D.T.F.F., Dept. 1, 14845, Anne, Allen Park, Mich. 48101 for more info.

Complain! Complain! That's all she ever does.
If it weren't for her looks, I'd leave her in a minute . . .

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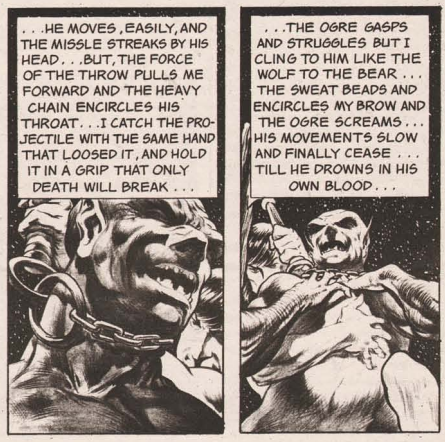
SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND HORROR
Reference Guide to Fantastic Films.
20,000 Listings; 50 Countries; 75 Years; Extensive Information; Thorough Cross-References. For a content sample send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Walt Lee, P.O. Box 66273, Los Angeles, CA9-0066.

WANTED! WANTED! WANTED!

WANTED—Old radio and comix premiums, to expand our museum of relics, trivia and the lore of 20th Century pop-art. Things like the BUCK ROGERS PISTOL, or a CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT DECODER RING . . . and all the rest of the stuff. These things have a place in our history, and we have a place for them on our shelves. Please send description and condition of items, plus the price you're asking, to TMTM, (THE MONSTER TIMES MUSEUM), P.O. Box 595, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y., 10011.



Two panels from BADTIME STORIES, by Berni Wrightson.

Badtime Stories

Baneful Berni Wrightson's brought out a bashingly brilliant book; BADTIME STORIES. Regular readers of THE MONSTER TIMES know wrenching Wrightson from his immortal color poster of Boris Karloff's FRANKENSTEIN in the centerfold of MT No. 1, and your bottom dollar can be bet that you'll be seeing more of his morbid phantasmagorically creepish, circusful of ghouls and goblins, freaks and fiends, and doomish demons in future issues of this wonderful monster newspaper.

But in the meanest of whiles, though, you can have a 48 page, permanently-bound slick-paper softcover creepish classic of six soul-annihilating solo stories of mystery and macabre, Berni's weirdly-wrought, wright-on BADTIME STORIES. We reviewed them in MONSTER TIMES NO. 6, recieved so much mail, that we bought a stock of them for you to order from us.

BADTIME STORIES is all Wright, son! Monster-sized (8½" x 11"), and monster-oriented, with color paintings on the front and back covers, and spine-chilling black and white artwork inside, it's a steal at the measly $5.00 per copy we're asking. (Though we won't tell you who's stealing from whom!)

So fill out the coupon below, and send it into THE MONSTER TIMES folk. Would we ever steer you wrong?

Wright-on! Wrightson's writhingly weird workmanship whets my wish-craft for his woebegone worlds! Rush _____ copies of BADTIME STORIES at $5.00 per copy plus 50¢ postage & handling ($5.50 total) to:
THE MONSTER TIMES
BOX 595
New York, N.Y. 10011

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THE EC FAMILY TREE

COMPILED BY Don and Maggie Thompson

EC comics are murder on a collector. They changed titles, numbers, and classifications as often as you change channels on a television set. It was almost a game; which comics could have more changes in one year!

Simply, EC ran a line of comics called **OLD TREND**. They ran from 1946 until 1950. Then EC introduced their famed **NEW TREND** which is what this issue has talked about. All those great horror and sci-fi comics came from the **NEW TREND**. Some New Trend titles were new books, but some just changed their titles from **OLD TREND** comics, keeping the same numbering. Then when the new **TREND** was a success, they changed their numbering, so some **NEW TREND** titles have more than one issue with the same number.

When the **NEW TREND** died, the **NEW DIRECTION** comics appeared, they were all new titles, with new numerings. For once EC thought of the collector.

Fat and Slat (Sum 47—Spr. 48) became
Gunfighter 5-14 (Sum 48—Mar/Apr. 50) which became
*The Haunt of Fear 15-17 (May/Jun 50—Sep/Oct 50) which split in two as
*Two-Fisted Tales 18-41 (Nov/Dec 50—Feb/Mar 55) and
*The Haunt of Fear 4-28 (Nov/Dec 50—Nov/Dec 54)
The Happy Houlihans 1-2 (Fal 47—Win 47/48) became
Saddle Justice 3-8 (Spr 48—Sep/Oct 49) which became
Saddle Romances 9-11 (Nov/Dec 49—Mar/Apr 50) which became
*Weird Science 12-15 (May/Jun 50—Jan/Feb 51) which changed its numbering
*Weird Science 5-22 (Jan/Feb 51—Nov/Dec 53)
Moon Girl and the Prince 1 (Fal 47) became
Moon Girl 2-6 (Win 47/48—Mar/Apr 49) which became
Moon Girl Fights Crime 7-8 (May/Jun 49—Sum 49) which then became
A Moon . . . A Girl . . . Romance 9-12 (Sep/Oct 49—Mar/Apr 50) which **then** became
*Weird Fantasy 13-18 (May/Jun 50—Mar/Apr 51) which changed its numering
*Weird Fantasy 7-22 (May/Jun 51—Nov/Dec 53) which then combined with Weird Science to become
*Weird Science Fantasy 23-29 (Mar 54—May/Jun 55) which became
*Incredible Science Fiction 30-33 (Jul/Aug 55—Jan/Feb 56)
International Comics 1-5 (Spr 47—Nov/Dec 47) became
International Crime Patrol (Spr 48) # 6 which became
Crime Patrol 7-16 (Sum 48—Mar/Apr 50) which then became

OLD TREND:
Animal Fables 1-6 (Jul/Aug 46—Sep/Oct 47)
Animated Comics 1 (Spr 48)
Blackstone the Magician Detective Fights Crime 1 (Fal 47)
Dandy Comics 1-7 (Spr 47-Spr 48)
Land of the Lost 1-9 (Jul/Aug 46—Spr 48)
Modern Love 1-8 (Jun/Jul 49—Aug/Sep 50)
Tiny Tot Comics 1-10 (1946—Nov/Dec 47)

NEW TREND:
Crime SuspenStories 1-27 (Oct/Nov 50—Feb/Mar 55)
Frontline Combat 1-15 (Jul/Aug 51—Jan 54)
Mad (comic) 1-23 (Oct/Nov 52—May 55)
Panic 1-12 (Feb/Mar 54—Dec 55/Jan 56)
Piracy 1-7 (Oct/Nov 54—Oct/Nov 55)
Shock SuspenStories 1-18 (Feb/Mar 52—Dec 54/Jan 55)
*New Trend Comics which were originally Old Trend Comics
*The Crypt of Terror 17-19 (May/Jun 50—Aug/Sep 50) which **then** became
*Tales from the Crypt 20-46 (Oct/Nov 50—Feb/Mar 55)
War Against Crime 1-11 (Spr 48—Feb/Mar 50) became
*The Vault of Horror 12-40 (Apr/May 50—Dec 54/Jan 55)

THE EC CHECK LIST

COMPILED BY JOE BRANCATELLI

Like any collector, an EC fan is a nut! He's crazy in a loveable way. For years now, the EC fan has been writing about the late lamented EC line, reprinting stories from the comics, and in their crowning achievement, will hold the first EC FAN ADDICT CONVENTION in New York in May. For the benefit of the MONSTER TIMES reader, here's a little list of some EC products above and beyond the EC comic books:

PAPERBACKS — *The Ballantine Book Company introduced a series of paperbacks which reprinted many of the classic* **EC** *stories. When the series was initiated in 1965, the price was 75¢ per copy, and the publishers planned many volumes. But, to the everlasting dismay of* EC *fans, only one of each title was printed. The titles were* **TALES FROM THE INCREDIBLE, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE AUTUMN PEOPLE,** *and* **VAULT OF HORROR.** *In* **TALES FROM THE INCREDIBLE,** *the famed* **EC** *race discrimination story "Judgement Day" was reprinted in it's entirety.* **THE AUTUMN PEOPLE** *is unique; it reprinted all the stories that* **EC** *adapted from the great science-fiction writer Ray Bradbury. Unfortunately, all copies are out of print! Issues of these paperbacks now cost about $2 from comic dealers. Also, in conjunction with the movie, a new* **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** *has been published. It's 75¢ and written by comic-book hack Jack Oleck from the screenplay of the movie.*

THE EC FAN ADDICT KIT — *One of the most unique and bizarre items ever to come from the EC fan is a reprint of the* **FAN-ADDICT** *kit.* **The EC FAN ADDICT CLUB** *was started back in 1953 by Al Feldstein and William Gaines. It offered a semi-regular bulletin direct from the editors, and often let the member be in on scoops such as the death of EC, and the start of it's new line. The prize of the kit, however, was the membership certificate, which was done in full color by Jack Davis. It was a beautiful piece of art, and is still treasured. Also included in the kit was an* **EC FAN ADDICT** *membership card which exhorted the holder to avail themselves of the privledge of buying* **EC** *comics at the regular newsstand price (what more could you ask for in a club?). Also, there was a fan addict material patch, and paper decal. It was reprinted last year at $2 and is virtually impossible to find this year.*

EC REPRINTS — *Reprinting of EC comics is a flourishing business. The best of the lot is a $10, mammoth folder called* **EC PORTFOLIO ONE.** *It reprints four EC stories and a cover. All stories are shot from originals, and are left in the large (10" by 13") size. For you art fans, check out the story called "Food For Thought". Replete with monsters of the garden variety, it boasts what many consider to be the greatest single splash page in comics history, done by Roy Krenkel and Al Williamson. It's still available from Russ Cochran, Route One, Adel, Iowa. Mr. Cochran plans to have still another portfolio of* **EC** *stories out in time for the* **EC** *convention. This one will cost $15 and will have a color cover by the incomparable Frank Frazetta. Russ also is selling prints of an* **EC** *cover, hand colored by Mr. Frazetta for $150. It's only for collectors, and mobsters looking for places to hide their money from Internal Revenue.*

From SQUA TRONT . . . a sketch for the cover of WEIRD FANTASY #19 done by Al Williamson. The final result, with an enlarged monster, is the cover for WEIRD FANTASY #21.

THE EC PRICE LIST

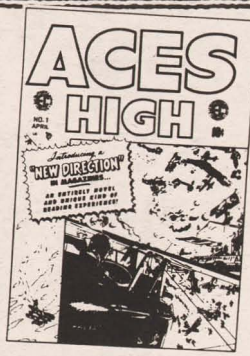
COMPILED BY JOE BRANCATELLI

Unless you've a small fortune accumulated under your pillow, you're not likely to be able to purchase many of the classic old EC comic books. In comparison to a few years ago when the price of an EC was about a buck, EC's today rarely go for less than $5 a copy.

An average copy of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** will cost about $7 in mint condition. The issue which tells the origin of the Crypt Keeper will run about $10, and some really early issues may run as high as $20. Copies of the **VAULT OF HORROR** are much more expensive. An average issue will run about $11, but any of the first four issues will cost at least $20, and as high as $35. Copies of an average issue of **HAUNT OF FEAR** will run about $8, with the very early issues about $12 to $30.

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES and **SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES** have a wide variety of prices. $5 will get you an average issue of **SHOCK**, while about $6 will get you a **CRIME**. Some of these, however, run as high as $15 for issues containing art by Williamson and Frazetta.

In the science-fiction issues, the prices run high. The two original titles, **WEIRD SCIENCE** and **WEIRD FANTASY** have issues that command prices as high as $35. The average issue will cost you about $15, with some of the very early **WEIRD SCIENCE** stories costing $25. When the two titles were merged in 1954 to become **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY** the prices did not change significantly. An average issue will cost about $12. When EC made it's last gasp, it introduced **INCREDIBLE**



Picture Stories from the Bible saw four issues in the Old Testament series and a complete Old Testament Edition, plus two New Testament issues and a Life of Christ edition from DC before M.C. Gaines left to form his own outfit. EC published two Old Testament reprints, a third New Testament issue, a reprint New Testament edition (#1) and a Complete New Testament Edition.

From here on, it's less complicated. Other EC publications were:

PICTURE STORIES: From American History 1-4 (1945-47); From Science 1-2 (Apr-Fal 47); From World History (Spr-Fal 47)

ANNUALS: Tales of Terror 1-3 (1951-1953); Two-Fisted Annual 1-2 (1952-1953); Weird Science-Fantasy 1-2 (1952-1953)

3-D COMICS: Three-Dimensional EC Classics 1 (Spr 54); Three-Dimensional Tales from the Crypt of Terror 2 (Spr 54)

NEW DIRECTIONS: Aces High 1-5 (Mar/Apr 55—Nov/Dec 55); Extra! 1-5 (Mar/Apr 55—Nov/Dec 55); Impact 1-5 (Mar/Apr 55—Nov/Dec 55); M.D. 1-5 (Apr/May 55—Dec 55/Jan 56); Psychoanalysis 1-4 (Mar/Apr 55—Sep/Oct 55); Valor 1-5 (Mar/Apr 55—Nov/Dec 55)

PICTO-FICTION: Confessions Illustrated 1-2 (Jan/Feb 56—Spr 66); Crime Illustrated 1-2 (Nov/Dec 55—Spr 56); Shock Illustrated 1-3 (Sep/Oct 55—Spr 56); Terror Illustrated 1-2 (Nov/Dec 55—Apr 56)

MAD (magazine 24- (Jul 55—) †(still published) ■

Other reprints of **EC** *stories were done by G.B. Love, Alan Light and Bob Brosch. If you can't afford $10 you might check out Mr. Light's book, which is devoted to Wally Wood's work on the science-fiction comics. While the stories are printed smaller than Russ's version, Light picks three of Wood's most monster-ful stories. You can pick up this version for only a buck from RR1, Box 297, East Moline, Illinois.*

EC FAN PUBLISHED MAGAZINES — *For as long as* **EC** *comics have been around,* **EC** *fans have published their own magazines devoted solely to* **EC** *comics. They started publishing them on a very small basis back in the early fifties, and they've been proliferating ever since. Some of the earliest were entitled* **POTRZEBIE, EC FAN JOURNAL, EC SLIME SHEET and EC SCOOP.** *They were very small things, and not very professional, but they were done by fans who loved* **EC** *and what* **EC** *stood for. Archie Goodwin, one of today's best comic book writers, published one.*

When comic book collecting became popular in the 1960's one of the first comic books to be talked about was the **EC** *line. Two of the best new* **EC** *fan-magazines were* **SQUA TRONT** *and* **SPA FON.**

The best single fanzine devoted to **EC** *was the 4th and final issue of* **SQUA TRONT.** *It cost $5, but it was worth every single penny of it. Attempts to describe the love and work that must have went into it's production would fall miserably short. The editor, Jerry Weist, produced a magazine that was unexcelled for its graphic excellence. It had four full-color covers. Not two, like a normal magazine but four. Itsatisfied not only the* **EC** *fan, but would also satisfy the monster fan. It's replete with monsters, horror and all the fun stuff* **MONSTER TIMES** *people love. It is still available for $5 from Jerry Weist, 1849 So. 127th Street, East Wichita, Kansas, 67202.*

SPA FON's *last issue was #5, but it was three years ago. It remains a tremendous value at two dollars. Interviews with Bill Gaines, Frank Frazetta and Johnny Craig. Plus tons of great art. Artwork of monsters, nudes, spacemen, everything you would associate with the great* **EC** *comics.*

POSTERS — *Everyone loves gory posters, right? Right! And the folks at Graphic Masters have come up with just that. At $2.50 a piece, these posters are the height of horror. They are 22" by 28", in full color. They are the uncensored versions of covers for EC comics. These are perfect for all the* **MONSTER TIMES** *readers who love horror and blood and gore and all that fun stuff. Order them from the Monster Times, Box 595, Old Chelsea Station, N.Y., NY, 10011.*

The prolific rate at which **EC** *material is being produced prohibits anyone from producing a complete list of* **EC** *products, but we at* **MONSTER TIMES** *feel that we have let you know about the best ones, and if you can pick them up, you should. No fan should be without them.* ■

SCIENCE-FICTION. An average issue is about $8. An issue of **PIRACY**... $5.

EC's war line has a fairly steady price. Featuring art by the great Harvey Kurtzman, early issues of **FRONTLINE COMBAT** and **TWO-FISTED TALES** run between $25 and $35. An average issue will cost about $10.

MAD Magazine was once a comic. The first 23 issues are in that format. The early issues go from $15 to $30, while an average issue will cost you about $10 to $15 a piece. **PANIC** will run about $4.

When EC introduced it's New Direction in 1955, the line consisted of **IMPACT, MD, EXTRA, VALOR, ACES HIGH** and **PSYCHOANALYSIS.** While they are good comics, they are not in high demand. Consequently, an average issue of any one of these will cost you about $3, with **VALOR** about $5.

The **EC three dimensional comics** will cost about $7, but these are rarely seen.

And, while you follow these comics' prices, keep in mind, that the prices quoted are only estimates and you may find issues higher (that's the breaks!), or lower (lucky kid!), and they are quotes for MINT condition. Lesser quality condition comics can be purchased for roughly 50% of the quoted prices. But don't bet on it! ■

HORROR

Continued from page 6

Kamen, Kurtzman, Severin, Krenkel, Elder, Torres, Krigstein, Wood and the others. One only hopes that the accompanying illustrations do more justice than mere words. The artistic genius of these men cannot be described in words. You have to look for yourself.

Mechanically, the book is a deft production of Nostalgia Press. The dustjacket is a reproduction of an old EC cover by Al Feldstein, and inside over 200 pages of the great art of EC is presented. The process for color reproduction was not the conventional four-color process used by comics, but the regular process used for books. The EC comics deserved it. Joe Orlando illustrated continuity pages of the books, and while they lack the creativity that made EC what it was that the covers that were reproduced with the story were not done in color. But for only twenty dollars, this is a book no horror comic fan can afford to miss.

EC died as the result of a strange witch-hunt, one stranger than was ever presented in E.C.'s own pages. When the remaining E.C. horror comics were cancelled in 1954, Gaines and Feldstein wrote this in their editorial:

"You may never read this magazine. For that matter, this magazine may never be printed. If it is printed, it may never be distributed. If it is distributed, it may be kept in a bundle behind the counter and will never see the light of day. But, if through some miracle, it does reach the newsstand, this will probably be the last issue of this magazine you will ever read."

Bill Gaines was wrong. E.C. books are still being read, still being admired. The second generation fans have already ferreted through the comic conventions looking for E.C. comics. The third generation of EC fans will soon be upon us, was, it was nice to see the Old Witches again. One story, Angelo Torres' **AN EYE FOR AN EYE,** had never been previously printed. There is a forward by long-time fan of E.C. Bhob Stewart (who works for our competition, CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN) and there is an "Appreciation" by Larry Stark, who, when he was a youngster reading EC comics, was a profuse letter-writer, and probably holds the record for most appearances in the E.C. letter column. If there was one complaint with the book, it was that it was a book no horror comic fan can afford to miss. and **THE EC HORROR LIBRARY OF THE 1950's** will serve as the record, perhaps the justification of E.C.'s existance.

Estes Kefauver is dead, and Doctor Wertham has recently concentrated on violence in movies and television, which has always been more violent than comic books. E.C. has outlasted them all, and if it hadn't, it would have been a terrible mistake in the cosmic order. Yes, E.C. HAS outlasted them all, and, in many ways, it's a kind of justice. ■

IN MEMORIAM

TALES FROM THE CRYPT:	Born January 1950	Died November 1954
THE VAULT OF HORROR:	Born February 1950	Died October 1954
THE HAUNT OF FEAR:	Born February 1950	Died October 1954
CRIME SUSPENSTORIES:	Born August 1950	Died October 1954
SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES:	Born December 1951	Died September 1954

You may never read this magazine. For that matter, this magazine may never be printed. If it *is* printed, it may never be distributed. If it *is* distributed, it may be kept in a bundle behind the counter and never see the light of day. But if, through some miracle, it *does* reach the newsstand, this will probably be the last issue of this magazine you will ever read.

As a result of the hysterical, injudicious, and unfounded charges leveled at crime and horror comics, many retailers and wholesalers throughout the country have been intimidated into refusing to handle this type of magazine.

Although we at E.C. still believe, as we have in the past, that the charges against horror and crime comics are utter nonsense, there's no point in going into a defense of this kind of literature at the present time. Economically our situation is acute. Magazines that do not get onto the newsstands do not sell. We are forced to capitulate. *We give up.* WE'VE HAD IT!

Naturally, with comic magazine censorship now a fact, we at E.C. look forward to an immediate drop in the crime and juvenile delinquency rate of the United States. We trust there will be fewer robberies, fewer murders, and fewer rapes!

We would like to say in passing... passing away, that is!... that if you have enjoyed reading E.C.'s horror and crime efforts over the past five years half as much as we have truly enjoyed creating them for you, then our labors of love have not been in vain.

But enough mush! This is not only an obituary notice; it is also a birth announcement!

BOY... WHAT WE GOT IN STORE FOR YOU! (Ya didn't think E.C. was gonna die with the books, did ya? We got talent we ain't even used yet!)

E.C. is planning the NEW NEW TREND. In January of 1955, we hit! In fact, we hit with five (5) sensational new titles. They won't be horror magazines... they won't be crime magazines! They'll be utterly new and different—but in the old reliable E.C. tradition! Naturally, we can't tell you what they'll be YET... we can feel the hot breath of our floundering competitors who followed us into horror on our necks. When the mags are ready to go, they'll be announced in MAD, PANIC, WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY, PIRACY, and TWO-FISTED TALES!

We feel it's gonna be a HAPPY NEW YEAR with our NEW NEW TREND!

Your grateful editors

END OF AN ERA! This announcement, included in the last issues of the E.C. horror and crime books, summarized the feelings of publisher Bill Gaines. A thank you to all E.C. readers, this little letter is so sad it still makes the printer's ink slide down our cheeks.

SEYMOUR
HORROR HOST SUPREME

by Mark Evanier

"Poor fish . . . No wonder it died, all wrapped up in dis crummy rag!
Why, this Monster Thing is the trashiest thing I've ever seen
in all my years of rummaging thru garbage dumps!"

Snow White and the 7 dwarves? . . . NO, gang . . . It's SEYMOUR and the Three gorgeous Ghouls! See more of Seymour skipping his way into your hearts . . . that's right gang, here in The Monster Times. Photo by Al Satian, Ltd.

Some horror movies have been screened unto death on television. Nary a week goes by that **BRIDE OF THE GORILLA** isn't foisted upon the public, somewhere. I, like the vast majority of Los Angeles film buffs, thought that there was *nothing* that could make us tune in for one more showing of **THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH** or some such shlock-shocker. But we failed to reckon with **SEYMOUR** . . . .

You may very well be asking yourself, even now, who this Seymour is–procf positive that you don't live in Los Angeles. Every Angeleno Knows Seymour as the gaunt, mustachioed weirdo who has attained a popularity unmatched by any other local personality. An ever-growing legion of loyalties is forsaking all else, come Saturday eve, to tune in on **KTLA, channel five** and see some vintage horror flick **Seymortified.**

There are, after all, good horror flicks and others that are to be avoided like Bon Vivant vichyssoise. "I call them the way I see them," Seymour proclaims and, indeed, he does. Before, after, and often *during* bad scenes, Seymour pops in with his special brand of caustic film criticism. No line of bad dialogue escapes his meat-cleaver sarcasm. And, if a slipshod movie director has allowed a casual view of the boom microphone or erred in some other technical way, leave it to Seymour to offer up an instant replay and isolate the *faux pas* for all of Southern California to see. When the film is of the caliber of, say, **ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE**, (Seymour's own *un*favorite) the film is likely to serve as one continuous straight line.

It all begins with a sting of eerie music as the camera pans over a slimy, moss-covered green wall. An unseen announcer delivers the voice-over shpiel in disjointed falsetto and climaxes with: ". . . and here he is, the Master of the Macabre, the Epitome of Evil, THE MOST SINISTER MAN TO CRAWL THE FACE OF THE EARTH . . . *Seymour!*" The wall swings open to release a burst of swamp mist/dry ice vapor from the nether regions, behind. And in strides Seymour, elegantly attired in wide-brimmed fedora, ruffled shirt and undertaker's tuxedo. He proclaims, "Tonight's feature is **DR. TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS**, a 1965 bomb that Donald Sutherland would like to forget. *But we're not going to let him!*"

Mr. Nielsen didn't report if Donald Sutherland was watching, shame or otherwise, that night. But a goodly fragment of Southern California, stretching as far as New Mexico, was. Estimates have it that the audience for such mediocre and/or well-worn movies is *double* what such films would attain, *sans Seymour*. Never before have such bad movies garnished such high ratings. Seymour and his alter-ego, Banjo Billy, are the cause.

Banjo Billy bears a striking physical resemblance to Seymour attired in a blazing-orange marching band outfit and a pair of glasses with a plastic nose attached. But the similarity ends there–Banjo Billy is bright and cheery; Seymour is sarcastic, irascible and downright insulting. A man named Larry Vincent confessed to the intrepid **MONSTER TIMES** Hollywood correspondent, "I'm really beginning to dislike Banjo Billy, personally. I got so mad at him once that I burned his costume and I had to go out and buy another one, myself."

Larry Vincent, as it happens, is the man who plays Seymour and, if the truth be known, Banjo Billy, as well. Few, if any, Seymour supporters are willing to admit, though, that such a person as "Larry Vincent" exists. "They recognize me on the street as Seymour and they expect to be insulted or ignored or treated rudely. I don't disappoint them:" Seymour, with all his splenetic independence, is fast seizing control of Vincent's slim body for his own, sinister purposes.

The body spent some twenty years in television control booths. "I was a staff-director and, naturally, had been associated with many horror film hosts. And they always came out with the spiders and the coffins . . . they'd leave the film alone and try to be funny or spooky by themselves. To me, there's nothing amusing about a guy making himself up to look horrible and coming out of a coffin. They ended up competing with the film, trying to do something even more fantastic with sets and make-up . . . I thought that, some day, I'd like the opportunity to try it with a different approach."

Vincent skipped from station to station, from Indianapolis to Hollywood, and from director to actor. Among other employs were a few local theatre productions, several **GET SMART** episodes and a forgettable self-sacrifice in **THE INCREDIBLE TWO-HEADED TRANSPLANT**. "I was doing a character role and was wiped out about ten minutes into the first reel," he explains. "When you're *too good*, the other actors get jealous and they write you out of the script." Nevertheless, if and when **TRANSPLANT** rears its ugly heads on **KTLA**, Seymour has vowed to replay his scene, *ad infinitum*.

Eventually, KHJ-TV, channel nine, had need of a horror host for their Saturday night **FRIGHT NIGHT**. Channel nine is a station noted for their poor equipment, its weak film library and its popularizing of the notion that the VHF dial stops at eight. But Seymour began to attract viewers while he refined his skill and style. "Tonight I have a pair for you," Seymour announced one evening. ". . . **MONSTER FROM THE SURF** and **THE HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL**. I never get any swell movies! You can stay here and watch these turkeys, if you like. I'm going to go crash the party down the street–!"

One evening, **FRIGHT NIGHT** aired *without* Seymour. In his stead was an overly-endowed Vampirella-type with the handle of Moona-Lisa. Within moments, and for days following, the KHJ switchboard was inundated with fiery letters of protest, irrefutable evidence that a good horror film fan would rather watch an emaciated, cynical ghoul than a voluptuous pretty lady with the spiders and the coffins and all that Seymour had broken away from.

Seymour had also broken away from channel nine, as it happened. He packed his slimy wall and took a better offer from **KTLA**, complete with the opportunity to show better films and to use better facilities. **Channel five** has the equipment to combine tape and film, permitting Seymour's wisecracks to be set directly *into* the movie. Vincent's directorial experience has also paid off in the engineering of many remarkable special effects wherein Seymour, himself, was actually set into the film as one of the characters. Horror devotees, tuning in on **DRACULA** for the nth time, found it a bit different, Seymour's time around. In the opera-box scene, where Bela Lugosi is introduced to several people, he also met Banjo Billy, who had been chromakey-superimposed into a formerly-empty chair, complete with opera glasses.

We asked Seymour/Vincent if dyed-in-the-wool horror buffs protested when he tampered with a classic. "There aren't enough classics, really. The original **DRACULA** was a classic, so we didn't do much to it. What we tamper with is things like **ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE**. I get a few nasty letters but so many are in favor of what we do that I'm sure the vast majority take it the way we intend it–as *satire*.

Seymour fans are plentiful. Seymour T-shirts are seen often, about town, and there is a Seymour fan club (official newsletter: **The Slimy Wall Times**). The fan club's official certificate proclaims: "To Whom it May Concern (and it won't) . . . This is to certify that (have a friend help you spell your name) is a member in bad standing of Seymour's Society of **FRINGIES** . . . You are an idiot of the first order . . ." There are Seymour posters, showing him rummaging through a garbage can, probably in search of that missing reel from **THE ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE**. And Seymour is very much in demand for personal appearances.

One memorable appearance took place at the Wiltern Theatre for the West Coast *"Screamiere"* of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT**. Prior to the feature, Seymour did his usual brand of shtick, much to the delight of the audience. And, fulfilling a brainstorm of some publicity agent for Metromedia films, held a *screaming contest*. The winner was invited up to the mike to give out with his award-winning shriek and, suddenly, the Wiltern was in the business of showing silent movies, not by choice. No one really minded having to walk out on the feature, for lack of audible soundtrack; they'd seen what they came for–Seymour!

Despite mounting popularity, Seymour has no plans to go the big-budget, giant set route. People tune in for Seymour and if there was any way to eliminate the movie, he might well draw an even bigger audience. He is planning guest stars, from time to time, though. "We're showing **HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** next week," he told us, pointing to a calendar which also had **I WAS A TEEN-AGE FRANKENSTEIN** and **HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER** listed. "John Carradine will be our guest and I'm going to give him the same treatment I gave Vincent Price, once. We were showing some Vincent Price film and I spent the first half talking about what a terrible job Vincent Price was doing in the film . . . I was really giving it to him and, then, the phone rang. It was Vincent Price, of course, and I began telling him what a great actor he was: 'Like I was just telling the people, Mr. Price, you certainly are delivering a splendid performance in this movie we're running!' Then, when we got off the phone, I went back to saying what a rotten film it was, *et cetera, et cetera* . . . "

Seymour is unique. Who else would splice thirty seconds of a Stan Laurel silent comedy, *non-sequitir*, into the middle of **WEREWOLF OF LONDON**? Who else would replay the lift-off scene from **QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE** and point out where one can see the wire on the space ship? Who else would pop into the midst of **THE RAVEN**, when a lady suggests they all go off to their nice warm beds, and say, in Groucho Marx-intonation, "That's the best idea I've hoid all night!"? And, remember the part of **X–THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES**, where Ray Milland asks Don Rickles, then an unknown, overweight actor, what he would want to see if he had x-ray eyes; and Rickles says, "All the undressed woman my poor eyes could stand!"? You can guess what fun Seymour had, splicing that response in to other parts of the film, in reply to other questions.

Despite his mischief, Larry Vincent does have a high regard for the craft of horror movies. "We're in the middle of a new cycle now," he says. "People want escape pictures and that's what horror movies are." His next project?–A stage production of **DRACULA** with the title role altered to suit Seymour's wise-cracking motif. It could be the local theatre event of the year and Vincent is sure the time is right.

No closing could be more fitting than Seymour's traditional one; **I'd like to thank you . . . I'd *like* to, but it's just not my style! Bad evening!"** And on that note, exits the most popular horror host Los Angeles has ever seen and, likely, the rest of the country, as well.

Seymour greets one of Transylvania's own girl-scouts at the Hollywood Screamiere of TALES FROM THE CRYPT (bet you thought we wouldn't get in some E.C. stuff in this here article!)

Photo by Al Satian, Ltd.

FLASH! EXTRA! SCOOP! WAIT . . . HOLD THE PRESSES! HANDS OFF THE SWITCHES, LACKEY, THIS MEANS YOU! . . . RUMOR HAS IT THAT SEYMOUR RECENTLY FOUND A COPY OF THE MONSTER TIMES WRAPPED AROUND A FISH HE HOOKED IN AN L.A. GARBAGE DUMP. AND . . . WELL, TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT AND A SHORT STORY SHORTER, IT SEEMS THAT SEYMOUR IS INTERESTED IN WRITING A REGULAR COLUMN FOR . . . THAT'S RIGHT, THE MONSTER TIMES! SEYMOUR'S BEEN DIGGIN' OUR GRAVEYARD ANTICS AND SAYS HE WANTS IN! THE FISH WAS UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENT . . . STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER DETAILS! ■

E.C. PORTFOLIO ONE (c) 1971 William M. Gaines

PORTFOLIO ONE

If we were product-testing something in this issue of The Monster Times, we'd pick this portfolio and give it an "A!"

BY JOE ALLAN

I don't remember exactly how many years ago it was, but it must have been 13 or 14 at least. I was trying to sneak out of the house to play some ball at the time, but my mom was determined that I get a haircut (most kids in the 50's were haunted by the ever-present Curse of the Creepy Crewcut) instead. With the money in my pocket, my mother opened the front door and pointed imperiously in the direction of Louie's Barber Shop. I had little choice but to go . . . so I went.

When I got to old Louie's, I found someone sitting in the lofty barber's chair ahead of me, so Louie turned around, tossed me a hello, and pointed to the old peeling, silver-painted radiator, which I could always count on to be piled a mile high with ragged, beat-up comic books, relics in their own time. Louie always had a fresh batch of old comics on hand, so I never had to worry about finding the same ones each time I went there. I had already read the latest Superman and Batman, and I had no love for the true-romance types, so I skipped through until I reached some horror stuff instead.

The first one I got my hands on was about some guy who had a wife who was always nagging him, who always had her claws knuckle-deep in the poor guys back. So one day he comes home, asks her politely to lay off, but she keeps on talking and nagging him, so he promptly kills her . . . cuts off her head, to be exact, and then casually goes bowling with it! Hmmm . . . I looked up and saw that the guy ahead of me was still in the chair so I kept on reading, greedy for more gore — and I wasn't disappointed. The next one was about a burglar who steps through this big door, only to find that it leads straightaway into a furnace, which literally burns him up. Those were the first horror comics I ever read, but after that I wasn't nearly as reluctant about visiting Louie as I had been before—I knew he would have a new stash of fright comics waiting for me.

Ghastly art from the classic "Horror We? How's Bayou?" seen in HAUNT OF FEAR #17.

But, like most things, the horror comics, and the science fiction books, passed into oblivion. There were a lot of them in those days, but I remember that some of them stood out stronger than the rest, and they stayed in my memory in bold, gruesome colors. All the ones that were better had one distinguishing mark in common — all had a small circle surrounding the initials "E.C." near the top of the cover.

So, from that time on, I made sure to look for the ones marked "E.C." and, to make doubly sure, made it a point to memorize the titles, which was the easiest part, since titles like THE VAULT OF HORROR, INCREDIBLE SCIENCE-FICTION, and TALES FROM THE CRYPT were easier to remember than to forget.

In those days you could buy them, find them, and swap them with no trouble at all. It's only now, years later, that we realize the errors of our ways, the way we treated those comics—tearing the pages, smearing them with our sticky fingers, throwing them away. love and luck, into a practical, money-making endeavour, things really started happening for Russ—and for all E.C. fans.

Adapted from a Ray Bradbury short-story, Johnny Craig's "Touch and Go" first saw print in CRIME SUSPENSTORIES #17, in '53.

Although no one is quite sure about how he managed to do it—probably by way of some secret black magic process that only he knows—Russ Cochran pressed for and more importatnly got permission to reproduce the choicest cuts of E.C. art . . . DIRECT FROM THE ORIGINALS! And what he's been doing with same is of even greater interest to E.C. fiends.

Cochran's E.E. Portfolio One contains four complete stories, printed on big matte-finished paper, and he exhibits no prejudices against either horror or sci-fi material, since this collection features the titles HORROR WE? HOW'S BAYOU?, TOUCH AND TO, MY WORLD and FOOD FOR THOUGHT. The first of these is one of *Graham Ghastly Ingels'* most frightening and bone-chilling art jobs, filled to the rafters with monstrous people and decaying houses sinking slowly into the swamps. TOUCH AND GO is illustrated by *Johnny Craig*; MY WORLD features the universe as seen THROWING THEM AWAY! Mein Gott, do you know what those comics would be worth today!

What with all the forgotten lore that was better off forgotten that's been dredged up and glorified by present-day nostalgia freaks, the E.C. Comics represent a lost treasure that deserves to be remembered, and remembered for the fantastic treats they were. One of the people who remembers them best is Russ Cochran of Adel, Iowa, who, unlike most of our sorry lot, was smart and lucky enough to save his collection of old E.C.'s, later trading them for mint copies of the same editions. And seeing the books in new condition started Russ down a previously unknown road: he began wondering about how the original E.C. artwork might look to us today.

From an original idea that grew, with through the infinite mind of *Wally Wood* and FOOD FOR THOUGHT boasts of artwork by *Al Williamson* and *Roy Krenkel* which include some of the most spectacular panels comicdom has ever seen.

Cochran's collection of shiver-provoking parables is bound and sells for a fast ten bucks. Well worth it, too, considering the quality of the art, its size and clarity, and the important fact that all these things are now available in a single book. It's a must for any E.C. fan with bread enough to afford it.

As for E.C. Portfolio Two, well, you can have a say in what will go into that one by filling out the ballot form contained in E.C. One. Among those artists included on the ballot are *Wood, Ingels, Jack Davis*, and *Harvey Kurtzman*. Along with the four stories that you can help select, there will also be a fifth tale, namely, *Frank Frazetta's* SQUEEZEPLAY: Plus a color *Frazetta cover*, upping the price of the second portfolio to $15. All orders, comments, and criticisms can be sent to: *Russ Cochran, Route One, Adel, Iowa 50003.*

And remember . . . Death Lives! ■

Two great talents combined to make a super-artist, as Al Williamson and Roy Krenkel united for "Food For Thought," in INCREDIBLE SCIENCE-FICTION #32 in

Artist Wally Wood gave us a fantastic picture of his universe in "My World," in WEIRD SCIENCE #22. A few panels from this 1953 masterpiece are pictured here.

FULL COLOR POSTERS

POSTERS BY FRANK FRAZETTA. 18 x 23

For mood and tone and anatomy and stark portraits of wonder, Frazetta is the master! Each poster awakens your sense of awe and fascination. The colors and details are reproduced magnificently. Breathtaking to see and own!

A. WEREWOLF (cover painting for CREEPY 4).

Silhouetted against an orange moon is the ravening beast of our nightmares, about to pounce on the victim who has unfortunately discovered him! $2.50

B. SKIN DIVER (cover painting for EERIE 3).

There is the treasure chest, spilling its riches into the ocean depth in which the awed skin-diver has discovered it. But what is that fearful, monstrous thing rearing up behind it? $2.50

C. BREAK THE BARBARIAN VS. THE SORCERESS (cover painting for Paperback Library paperback).

Brak, with sword and on horseback, looks up into murky skies to see—is it a vision of a woman? Is that evil she seems to convey? Or menace $2.50

D. CONAN OF CIMMERIA (cover painting for Lancer paperback)

Toe to toe, Conan fights with brute savagery, death in every axe-stroke, against two frost giants. The scene is a blazingly white mountain top under an ice-blue sky! Thorough drama! $2.50

E. CONAN THE CONQUEROR (cover painting for Lancer paperback)

Bursting like a firestorm into the midst of a hellish battle, Conan comes, astride his maddened charger, cleaving his bloody way! The background is fire and death and savagery $ 2.50

ALL FIVE FRAZETTA POSTERS $10.00

(POSTERS ARE MAILED IN STRONG CARDBOARD TUBES)

THE OLD ABANDONED WAREHOUSE!

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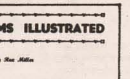

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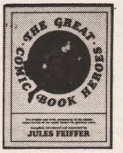

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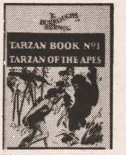

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GAINES & FELDSTEIN

Continued from page 18

BILL: Well, you must have been reading a lot of that stuff in those days too.

I was influenced not by any of the classic horror writers certainly. I read Poe; I couldn't tell you more than 2 or 3 things of his that I read, so it wasn't all that much. I was influenced mostly by the radio and the pulps.

AL: Me too.

BILL: . . . and the movies. The mass media of the day. Who they were influenced by—I don't know. But I was not influenced by any high faluting writers. I was influenced by low-faluting writers. And the same with the science fiction. When I was a kid, I read the science fiction pulps, AMAZING & ASTOUNDING. There was no galaxies in those days. When we first started publishing, I don't think Al & I knew any of the great science fiction authors or even any of the great horror authors. We ended up knowing who they were. In fact, we discovered Bradbury.

AL: I think that that might have been an advantage.

BILL: Oh, I suppose it was.

AL: Because here we were doing science fiction in the comics. If we had been influenced by John Campbell's **ASTOUNDING** *and the writers that were in it, I think we would have been way out of our level of readership that we started with. I think we were hung up in terms of making this a visually entertaining media. So I think that my naivety in these areas was good. And Bill's knowledge of the story lines and the way they worked was enough for us to work together on plotting and coming up with something specifically designed for the problem at hand which was a visual presentation of the story. Later on we got a little more verbose because we came under the influence of these writers. I think I did.*

AL: Horror too, Bill. When you read the first Terror—

BILL: In the horror we reached a certain level and we never went beyond it. But with the science fiction, we probably wouldn't have entertained the thought of doing anything approaching some of the stuff that was in ASTOUNDING in those days. But we ended up doing stuff that might have been in ASTOUNDING in those days. Four or five years later because we did develop. No question about it.

AL: Wouldn't you say that the science fiction was our ego trip? Mine from the writing style and yours from the plotting and intrigue and the complicated theoretical stuff?

BILL: We always said we were proudest of our science fiction, but the damn things were losing money.

AL: We'd spend hours, Bill and I, discussing the theoretical situations in terms of them coming up with a story. Time loops and reverse time loops.

BILL: It was pretty near the end of the rope for us.

TMT: Let's see now. The illustrators tried to visualize all the stuff you did. They obviously had it a lot easier than most because you did write heavy descriptions. We've heard it said the captions actually encouraged people to get into reading, develop their reading skills and such.

AL: I wish you were around during the investigation days—ha ha ha ha.

BILL: Well, I'm sure you are right to some extent because our books were more literate, in a very rough sense, than most comics because Al was so heavy with the words. But the damn words were so beautiful that I never wanted to cut them down.

AL: We presented to the artist something that no comic book artist had ever gotten up to that point. We presented him with the drawing page, with the story already on it, with the ballons already in place. What I did was to write the stories directly on the illustration board. It went to Bill who read it and edited it and it went from there to the letterer who lettered it and then we had a session with the artist. We gave him the story and we said, "Sit down and read it."

This here boy is Jack Davis. Yes, suh, no doubt 'bout it. He's whistling DIXIE while lynching that doll Johnny Craig thought he finished off back on page 18.

And he would sit down and read it and whatever he didn't understand we would tell him what goes on in each panel. We didn't say—we didn't supply him with the initiating sketches or anything like that.

BILL: Al presented an artist with a blank piece of paper with nothing on it except panel lines.

AL: That wasn't blank.

BILL: I said blank except . . .

AL: Oh, yeah. Generally what went on in each panel is what I would tell him.

BILL: The only thing he'd tell him was what was happening. He wouldn't tell him how to put what where. That's where the artists were given free range. If somebody was hitting somebody over the head with a hatchet, the guy had to be there. But from any angle and any way the artist wanted to draw it.

The boy wonder himself, Al Williamson. You can catch him now and then up at The Monster Times offices.

Now, Harvey, on the other hand, worked in an entirely different way. Harvey also wrote the stories. He broke it down, and he gave it to them on blank pieces of paper, lettered, except that over each panel was a piece of tracing with the exact layout of the panel sketched in the way Harvey wanted it. So, in that sense, Harvey didn't give the artist any chance.

AL: Harvey and I were always at odds about that.

BILL: Harvey didn't give them any chance to express themselves in the format of what they wanted to do. Harvey was more like an orchestra conductor getting out of each instrument exactly what he wanted. Al did the completely opposite thing. Al was thoroughly permissive.

AL: Unless they were missing a point or leaving out something important or it wasn't clear what was going on . . .

BILL: These guys eventually got to be such pros that they knew what Al wanted. They'd just brought it in . . .

AL: You're right. Actually the script was right there. The descriptions were right there to a certain point, you know. But they visualized what was written their way. And so I did not have stories that I wrote and were drawn the way I would draw them. I don't think that was the thing. Because then everybody—Graham and Orlando or Wood or Davis would be all doing their renditions of my drawings and I didn't believe in that. And I don't do that today in **MAD** *either.*

TMT: If you would have originally conceived them pretty accurately because as an artist and as a writer you had a strong mental image in your head which . . .

AL: Yeah, but I'm not omnipotent and there are better people around than me and including those guys. I feel like I'm the baker who brings in the sponge cake and lets them put the icing on their way. You know what I mean? As long as the basic ingredients are there, they're only going to add, not detract.

BILL: Of course, on the other hand, your point is well taken and that was one of the other successes of the three editors . . . . Feldstein, Kurtzman and Craig. All were first and foremost artists.

So, therefore, more than the average comic script writer they think visually and everything in the comics in those days was thought out visually.

Even as they were writing it. They were thinking visually.

TMT: Roy Thomas once told me that the Feldstein covers were the most commercially successful because of their punch and the static horror quality.

This guy is Harvey Kurtzman. Why is he smiling? Wouldn't you smile if you were drawing LITTLE ANNIE FANNY?

AL: You know—I never felt I was a really good artist and Bill was always patting me on the back and saying you are a good artist. You tell a story very well. And I always felt that there were a lot better artists around. You know, Wood to me was fantastic and Davis and Johnny Craig. I admired Johnny, all of these guys more than I admired myself. I always felt I was static. And yet this very static thing people would tell me in retrospect was what made my material interesting.

BILL: I always draw a parallel with Chester Gould (DICK TRACY artist) because as an illustrator, he leaves much to be desired, but as a story teller, which is what he is, he's been on the top of the file for 30 years. And Al was the same kind of situation. There may have been better illustrators on the staff but there were certainly no better story tellers. Unfortunately, Al couldn't illustrate everything. So he just didn't. Ultimately he illustrated nothing except a few science fiction covers to keep his hands in it.

Graham Ingels again. And that doll shows up for an encore. He must have been well-liked!

AL: Yeah, but that was because I was writing.

BILL: You were writing and editing if you want to get technical. We turned out almost an issue a week in those days.

AL: We wrote four stories a week and one day for goofing around and writing a letter page and stuff like that. But approximately four stories a week and then we'd have like a week off. We did?

BILL: Yeah. We did seven titles, six issues a title. So 42 weeks a year we turned out a book a week. The other ten weeks were either vacations or days off or just extra time to do what we hadn't really done on the one a week because we didn't really maintain that schedule perfectly.

TMT: Well, The Monster Times tanks you guys for giving us this interview. I gotta go now. The Monster Times Oldsmobile is coming to pick me up, and if I don't get back to the office by midnight, it turns into a boiling cauldron.

BILL: As the Old Witch might say, "It's going to be a hot time in the Olds town tonight . . ." ■

And as we leave the master himself, Bill Gaines is merrily chasing his secretary around his desk. See, they always said comics perverted your mind!

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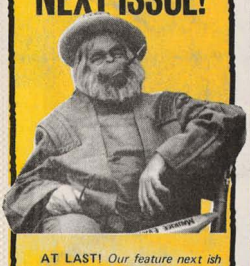

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PS: I pledge by the light of the next full moon to bother my local newsdealer until he (a) shakes in his boots at the sight of me, and (b) regularly and prominently displays **THE MONSTER TIMES.**

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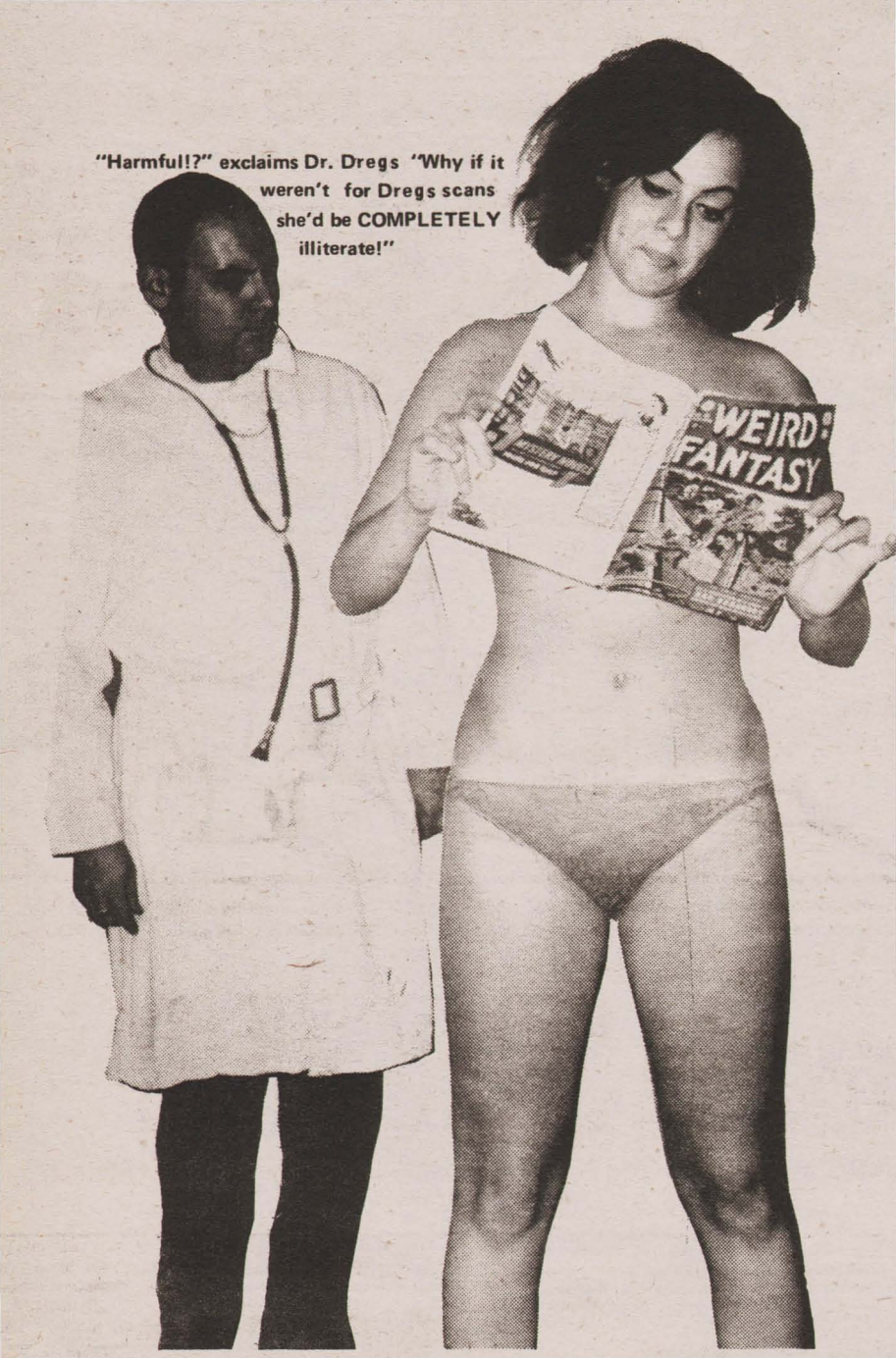
"Harmful!?" exclaims Dr. Dregs "Why if it weren't for Dregs scans she'd be COMPLETELY illiterate!"
WEIRD FANTASY